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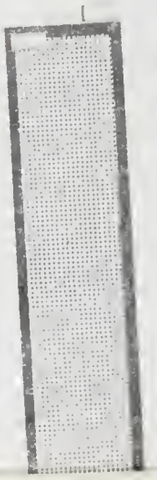
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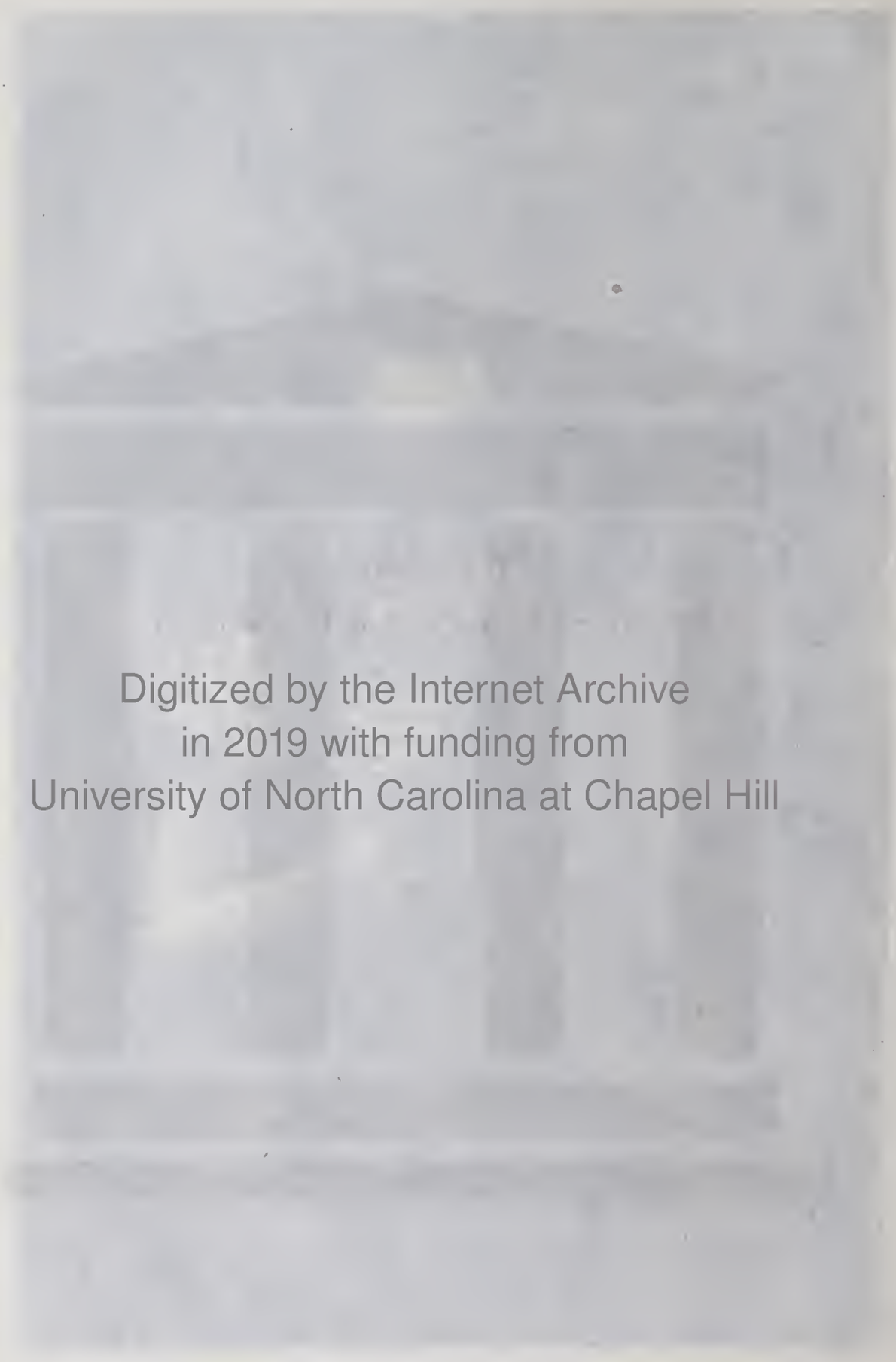
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Fedalma

Photogravure. — From Painting by George Fuller



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Edition de Luxe

Complete Poems

Scenes of Clerical Life

By

GEORGE ELIOT

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The C. T. Brainard
Publishing Co.

Boston New York

EDITION DE LUXE

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To My Dear

EVERY DAY DEARER

HUSBAND.

242544

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GEORGE ELIOT AS A POET.

(*From the Contemporary Review, vol. viii. p.* 397.)

As if a strong, delightful water that we knew only as a river appeared in the character of a fountain; as if one whom we had wondered at as a good walker or inexhaustible pedestrian, began to dance; as if Mr. Bright, in the middle of a public meeting, were to oblige the company with a song, — no, no, not like that exactly, but like something quite new, — is the appearance of George Eliot in the character of a poet. "The Spanish Gypsy," a poem in five books, originally written, as a prefatory note informs us, in the winter of 1864–65, and, after a visit to Spain in 1867, re-written and amplified, is before us. It is a great volume of three hundred and fifty octavo pages; and the first thing which strikes the reader is, that it is a good deal longer than he expected it would be. This is bad, to begin with. What right has anybody to make a poem longer than one expected? The next thing that strikes one is, — at all events, the next thing that struck me was, as I very hastily turned over the book, — that the fine *largo* of the author's manner, continued through so many pages, was a very little burdensome in its effect. That may come of the specific levity of my taste; but it is as well to be quite frank.

Dr. Holmes, of Boston, says, — I fear I am repeating myself, as he did with his illustration of the alighting huma, —

that a poem is like a violin in the respect that it needs to be kept and used a good deal before you know what music there is in it. If that is so, what may here be said of George Eliot's poem will have but little value; for the book has only been in my hand a few days, at a time when my preoccupation is great, and reading is painful to me. But, in the first place, I do really think my hasty impressions are correct in this case; and, in the second, I shall find some way of returning to the book, if after very often-repeated readings (according to my habit) I alter any of my opinions.

In the *Argosy* I once gave reasons for looking forward with deep interest to anything George Eliot might do in the shape of poetry, and also hinted the direction in which her risk of greater or less failure appeared to me to lie. "You can never reckon up these high-strung natures, ever ready to be re-impregnated," or tell what surprises they may have in storé for you. It had often struck me that there was a vein of poetic *expression* in the writing of George Eliot, of which a hundred instances might have been given. But the question of questions remained: Had she such a power, not to say necessity, of spontaneous expression in verse, that when we saw her poetry we should inevitably say, as Milton said of himself, that the expression in verse was the right-hand speech, that in prose the left-hand speech? How fine are the shades or gradations of quality in this respect, can be little understood by those who have not, by instinct or otherwise, fed, so to speak, on verse. For example, we all know that Wordsworth often wrote, in the printed form of verse, the most utterly detestable prose. Yet he could and did produce most exquisite verse. Again, a living poet of the school of Wordsworth, Mr. Henry Taylor, barely, or little better than barely, enables us to say of him that verse is his right-hand and prose his left. Still, after some little demur, we *are* able to say it; and we call him a poet.

It must not be supposed that this is by any means a matter of mere fluency, correctness, or ease of numbers. Macaulay wrote verses far superior in these particulars to many of Mr. Henry Taylor's and many of Wordsworth's. Yet verse was, unequivocally, Macaulay's left-hand; and after adolescence, few people can read his verse for poetry. If I were not unwilling to rouse the prejudice of (I fear!) most of my readers, I should here add Edgar Poe; and, indeed, I really cannot spare him as an illustration. He must have some queer hybrid place, all to himself (which it would take an essay to define); but though he may be said to have felt verse his right-hand medium of expression, some few of us hesitate to call him a poet. Not to complicate this matter, let us come at once to the point. What is it that in excellent verse differentiates[1] that which is poetry and that which is not? Not mere fluency, but unconscious fluency; in a word, simplicity. Whatever art may do for the poet, he must be a *simple* musician to begin with.

In looking rapidly over this poem of George Eliot's I have — let me confess it — I have been inclined to fear that this "note" of simplicity is wanting. And, in spite of an abundance of fine passages, I fear, also, there is not the perfect fluency of use and wont. It has been maintained, under shelter of Elizabethan models, that you may do almost anything in dramatic blank verse, in the way of lengthening and shortening the line. I object to the doctrine, and maintain that the Elizabethan examples cited are, in many instances, mere bits of negligence; and, in others, roughnesses of workmanship belonging to the lusty youth of a new art. Blank verse means ten-syllable iambic lines. If there are deviations from this form, as there often are, and should be, they must be regulated deviations, not accidental intrusions of other forms. . . .

[1] I have seen this word objected to as a scientific foppery; but in its form of *to difference*, the verb is a good old English verb.

The versification of "The Spanish Gypsy" often breaks out into the very highest excellence; but it too often wants spontaneity and simplicity.

As the same observation applies to the lyrics, one has little hesitation in coming to the conclusion that the primal peculiarity which distinguishes the singer from the sayer is either lacking in George Eliot or that its function has suffered from disuse. I still hesitate to say suffered irreparably, because I still think the orbit of a genius like George Eliot's incalculable. With such a noble ambition, and such immense resources, one may do almost anything. Thus, though I confess I *now* think it improbable that George Eliot will ever exhibit in a poem the true simplicity of the singer, and compel her readers to admit that her music is better than her speech, I hesitate, or well-nigh hesitate, in saying even so much as that. It is very pathetic that a noble ambition should come so near its mark and yet fail. Only what are we to do? The truth must be spoken.

Against the presumption raised by the bulk of the writing must, in fairness, be set the evidence of particular passages, in which the author attains such high excellence that if one had seen those passages alone, there would have been no hesitation or doubt on the score of melody. A few of these, in some of which the reader will catch fine touches of Elizabethan inspiration, I will pick out of the mass.

Take, for an example, this description of Zarca: —

> "He is of those
> Who steal the keys from snoring Destiny
> And make the prophets lie."

And this: —

> "My vagabonds are a seed more generous,
> Quick as the serpent, loving as the hound,
> And beautiful as disinherited gods.
> They have a promised land beyond the sea."

And this: —

"Spring afternoons, when delicate shadows fall
Pencilled upon the grass; high summer morns
When white light rains upon the quiet sea
And corn-fields flush with ripeness."

And this: —

"Present and silent and unchangeable
As a celestial portent."

Lastly, the best lyric in the poem: —

"The world is great: the birds all fly from me,
The stars are golden fruit upon a tree
All out of reach: my little sister went,
And I am lonely.

"The world is great: I tried to mount the hill
Above the pines, where the light lies so still,
But it rose higher: little Lisa went,
And I am lonely.

"The world is great: the wind comes rushing by,
I wonder where it comes from; sea-birds cry
And hurt my heart; my little sister went,
And I am lonely.

"The world is great: the people laugh and talk,
And make loud holiday: how fast they walk!
I'm lame, they push me: little Lisa went,
And I am lonely."

Besides the want of spontaneity and simplicity in the verse, there are other points which make us feel, with whatever reluctance to admit the thing we undoubtingly see, that in "The Spanish Gypsy" something is wanting, and in that something everything that endears a poem *as* a poem. The writing has the diffuseness of literature rather than the condensation of poetry; and, admirable as some of it is, we wish it away: at the lowest, we say to ourselves, if a poet had had

to utter this, our pleasure would have been perfect; but, as it is, what is before us is almost too good, and yet it is not good enough; it does not compel us to think, *le poëte a le frisson*, either while we read or afterwards. There is too much aggregation and accumulation about it; we are set thinking, and set feeling; we are agitated; but we are not thrilled by any single sudden notes. Lastly, or all but lastly, some of the frequent touches of humorous detail are fatal: —

> "Enter the Duke, Pablo, and Annibal,
> Exit the cat, retreating towards the dark."

This, and all this kind of thing, is gravely wrong in a poem. In some cases the phraseology has this species of modern familiarity and curtness; in others, the equally distinguishable *largo* of the modern philosophic manner, while what is supremely needed, namely, finish, is what we in vain go longing for.

Finally, the intellectual groundwork, or outline, of the poem shows far too plainly under the coloring of passion and the movement of the story. Since "Silas Marner" we have had no book from George Eliot to which this criticism would not, in some degree, be applicable. There is not room here for any exhibition of all the recurring ideas of George Eliot's writings, but one in particular has been growing more and more prominent since "Silas Marner," and of which the first hint is in "The Mill on the Floss." "If the past is not to bind us," said Maggie Tulliver, in answer to the importunities of Stephen Guest, "what is?" In a noticeable and well-remembered review of Mr. Lecky's "History of Rationalism," George Eliot told us that the best part of our lives was made up of organized traditions (I quote from memory, but the meaning was plain). Putting these two things together, we get the intellectual ground-plan of "The Spanish Gypsy." Perhaps the illustrious author of the poem would resent the idea that any moral was intended to be conveyed

by her recent writings; but, assuredly, this moral is thrust upon us everywhere, in a way which implies, if not intention, very eager belief.

Leaving the workmanship and the intellectual conception, or interwoven moral criticism, of the poem, and coming to the story, I am sure of only echoing what all the world will say when I call this in the highest degree poetic; and poetically dramatic, too. I must add, and with emphasis, that the story seems to me to gain, as a story, by this mode of presentation, — as I firmly believe "Romola" would have gained, if the question of perfect poetic expression could have been got over. In other words, although the manner of the novelist too often obtrudes itself in "The Spanish Gypsy," the author has told the story more affectingly, and with much more of truthfulness and local color and manner, than she would have done if she had been writing it as a novel. Compare, for example, what I think are among the very finest things George Eliot has ever done, — the scene between Juan the troubadour and the Gypsy girls, at the opening of Book III., and the scene in which Don Amador reads to the retainers of Don Silva from "Las Siete Partidas" the passage beginning, "Et esta gentileza aviene en tres maneras" (the critical reader who stumbles at the "et" must be informed that this is thirteenth-century Spanish), — compare these two scenes, I say, with the first scene in the barber's shop, and the scene of the Florentine joke, in "Romola," and note how very much the author gains by assuming the dramatic form. I have heard readers of much critical ability, and much poetic and dramatic instinct, too, complain that they did not see the force of those scenes in "Romola;" but it must be an incredibly dull person that misses the force of those scenes in "The Spanish Gypsy." The love-passages, also, are exquisitely beautiful; and in them again the author has gained by using the dramatic form. I dare to add that

she has, however, lost by some of the (so to speak) "stage-directions." We don't want to be told how a man and woman of the type of Don Silva and Fedalma[1] look when they are saying certain things. We can feel pretty sure when the moment would be too sweet and solemn even for kissing. As Sam Slick said, "Natur' teaches that air."

The story of "The Spanish Gypsy" is simply this: Fedalma, a Zincala, is lost in her early childhood, and brought up by a Spanish duchess, Don Silva's mother. As she grows to womanhood Silva loves her, and she is on the point of marrying him when the narrative opens. But Fedalma's father, Zarca, a Gypsy Moses, Hiawatha, or both, devoted to the regeneration of his tribe, suddenly appears upon the scene and claims his daughter. Will she marry Don Silva, or go with her father and be the priestess of a new faith to the Zincali? She decides to accompany her father. Upon this Silva renounces his position as a Spanish noble and Christian knight and becomes a Zincalo. This implies the relinquishment of his post as commander of the town and fortress of Bedmár, which it is his duty to guard against the Moors; but he is not aware, at the time he takes the Gypsy oath, that Zarca is already in league with the Moors to take the fortress. Zarca and the Moors, however, succeed in investing the place, and some noble Spaniards, friends of Silva's, including his uncle, Father Isidor, are slain. Mad with remorse and rage, Silva stabs Zarca, but is allowed to go free. The poem closes with the departure of Silva to obtain absolution from the Pope, in order that he may recommence the career of a Christian knight, and the departure of Fedalma to begin, as best she may, the work bequeathed to her by her father, namely, the regeneration of the Zincali.

[1] I do not remember having ever seen this name before; it is an exquisitely musical word, and, I suppose, is intended to mean Faith of the Soul, or, more intelligibly to *some* people (not to be envied), Spiritual Fidelity.

One thing is obvious on the face of this story, — that Silva was guilty, in so far as he was an apostate. But there will not be wanting readers who when asking the question who was the cause of all the misery with which the narrative overflows, will say, Fedalma. It was all very well to say that her past bound her. But which past? When Zarca started up, she was pledged by her "past" to Silva, and she loved him. What Zarca imported into the situation was, as lawyers say, new matter. The morrow would have seen her married to Silva; and what *then*, if Zarca had appeared upon the stage with his Gypsy patriotism? All the future was dark to her, there was no reason whatever to believe that either she or Zarca would be able to regenerate the Gypsies; there was present actual proof that she was essential to Silva, life of his life, and the bond of his being. What right had she to forsake him? It is idle to discuss this, but since, as far as I can make out, there is distinct teaching in the poem, and that teaching is of no force unless Fedalma was, *beyond question*, right, it is perfectly fair and appropriate to suggest that there is room for question. It seems to me a little curious that George Eliot does not see that the same reason which made Sephardo, the astrologer, a son first and a Jew afterwards, would make Fedalma a betrothed woman first and a Zincala next.

But I do not dwell upon this point, because I look forward to another opportunity of dealing with what we are now entitled to assume is George Eliot's evangel, —

> ". . . . that Supreme, the irreversible Past."

Irreversible, no doubt, but — "Supreme!" The reader must not imagine that I am darting captiously at a word here. Not at all. George Eliot has a very distinct meaning, which is very distinctly affiliated to a certain mode of thought. To this mode of thought may be traced the astounding discords

of her late writings, or rather the one astounding discord which runs through them.

In submitting to the world a poem, George Eliot is under one serious disadvantage. There are certain particulars in which she is not likely, in verse, to excel her own prose. Clear and profound conception, and emphatic, luminous, and affecting presentation of character, is one of them. The power of inventing dramatic situation is another. In these particulars "The Spanish Gypsy" falls behind nothing that this distinguished writer has done; though I do not myself feel that either Fedalma or Zarca is dramatically presented to us. Indeed, vivid as George Eliot's painting of character always is, and profoundly intelligent, I never thought it dramatic. Nor is it. Here, as in the other books of George Eliot, character is always most vividly described and analyzed; and what the people do is, of course, in exact accordance with what is described; but none of them reveal themselves without having had the advantage of some criticism. None of them, that is to say, reveal themselves by action only, or by action and speech only, unless the speech takes a critical form. Zarca is shadowy, and Fedalma shadowy. But Juan and Silva we understand well because they are criticised; and Isidor the prior, and Sephardo the Jew, we understand well, because their talk is criticism of a kind which only a certain order of mind could produce. Perhaps the finest portions of the poem lie in some of these critical or quasi-critical passages. Let us take "The Astrologer's Study":—

> "A room high up in Abderahman's tower,
> A window open to the still warm eve,
> And the bright disk of royal Jupiter.
> Lamps burning low make little atmospheres
> Of light amid the dimness; here and there
> Show books and phials, stones and instruments.
> In carved dark-oaken chair, unpillowed, sleeps

Right in the rays of Jupiter a small man,
In skull-cap bordered close with crisp gray curls,
And loose black gown showing a neck and breast
Protected by a dim-green amulet;
Pale-faced, with finest nostril wont to breathe
Ethereal passion in a world of thought;
Eyebrows jet-black and firm, yet delicate;
Beard scant and grizzled; mouth shut firm, with curves
So subtly turned to meanings exquisite,
You seem to read them as you read a word
Full-vowelled, long-descended, pregnant, — rich
With legacies from long, laborious lives."

Juan's criticism of himself: —

"I can unleash my fancy if you wish
And hunt for phantoms: shoot an airy guess
And bring down airy likelihood, — some lie
Masked cunningly to look like royal truth
And cheat the shooter, while King Fact goes free,
Or else some image of reality
That doubt will handle and reject as false.
Ask for conjecture, — I can thread the sky
Like any swallow, but, if you insist
On knowledge that would guide a pair of feet
Right to Bedmár, across the Moorish bounds,
A mule that dreams of stumbling over stones
Is better stored."

And, assuredly, I must not omit the study of the character of Silva himself: —

"A man of high-wrought strain, fastidious
In his acceptance, dreading all delight
That speedy dies and turns to carrion:
His senses much exacting, deep instilled
With keen imagination's difficult needs; —
Like strong-limbed monsters studded o'er with eyes,
Their hunger checked by overwhelming vision,
Or that fierce lion in symbolic dream
Snatched from the ground by wings and new-endowed
With a man's thought-propelled relenting heart.

Silva was both the lion and the man;
First hesitating shrank, then fiercely sprang,
Or having sprung, turned pallid at his deed
And loosed the prize, paying his blood for naught.
A nature half-transformed, with qualities
That oft bewrayed each other, elements
Not blent but struggling, breeding strange effects,
Passing the reckoning of his friends or foes.
Haughty and generous, grave and passionate;
With tidal moments of devoutest awe,
Sinking anon to farthest ebb of doubt;
Deliberating ever, till the sting
Of a recurrent ardor made him rush
Right against reasons that himself had drilled
And marshalled painfully. A spirit framed
Too proudly special for obedience,
Too subtly pondering for mastery:
Born of a goddess with a mortal sire,
Heir of flesh-fettered, weak divinity,
Doom-gifted with long resonant consciousness
And perilous heightening of the sentient soul.
But look less curiously: life itself
May not express us all, may leave the worst
And the best too, like tunes in mechanism
Never awaked. In various catalogues
Objects stand variously."

There is only one living mind which could have given us poetico-psychological studies of human character like these. There is no comparison in range of faculty between such a mind and John Clare's. Is it not strange, and almost pathetic, that an uncultivated peasant could sing, and touch us with music, as no speech could; and yet that a highly cultivated mind like George Eliot's should almost overwhelm our judgment by the richness and volume of what it pours forth in the name of song; and yet that we are compelled to say the bird-note is missing?

MATTHEW BROWNE.



Portrait of George Eliot.

EXTRACTS FROM GEORGE ELIOT'S LIFE.

EDITED BY J. W. CROSS.

AMONG my wife's papers were four or five pages of manuscript headed "Notes on the Spanish Gypsy and Tragedy in General." There is no evidence as to the date at which this fragment was written, and it seems to have been left unfinished. But there was evidently some care to preserve it; and as I think she would not have objected to its presentation, I give it here exactly as it stands. It completes the history of the poem.

"The subject of 'The Spanish Gypsy' was originally suggested to me by a picture which hangs in the Scuola di' San Rocco at Venice, over the door of the large Sala containing Tintoretto's frescos. It is an Annunciation, said to be by Titian. Of course I had seen numerous pictures of this subject before; and the subject had always attracted me. But in this my second visit to the Scuola di' San Rocco, this small picture of Titian's, pointed out to me for the first time, brought a new train of thought. It occurred to me that here was a great dramatic motive of the same class as those used by the Greek dramatists, yet specifically differing from them. A young maiden, believing herself to be on the eve of the chief event of her life, — marriage, — about to share in the ordinary lot of womanhood, full of young hope, has suddenly announced to her that she is chosen to fulfil a great destiny,

entailing a terribly different experience from that of ordinary womanhood. She is chosen, not by any momentary arbitrariness, but as a result of foregoing hereditary conditions: she obeys. 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord.' Here, I thought, is a subject grander than that of Iphigenia, and it has never been used. I came home with this in my mind, meaning to give the motive a clothing in some suitable set of historical and local conditions. My reflections brought me nothing that would serve me, except that moment in Spanish history when the struggle with the Moors was attaining its climax, and when there was the gypsy race present under such conditions as would enable me to get my heroine and the hereditary claim on her among the gypsies. I required the opposition of race to give the need for renouncing the expectation of marriage. I could not use the Jews or the Moors, because the facts of their history were too conspicuously opposed to the working out of my catastrophe. Meanwhile the subject had become more and more pregnant to me. I saw it might be taken as a symbol of the part which is played in the general human lot by hereditary conditions in the largest sense, and of the fact that what we call duty is entirely made up of such conditions; for even in cases of just antagonism to the narrow view of hereditary claims, the whole background of the particular struggle is made up of our inherited nature. Suppose for a moment that our conduct at great epochs was determined entirely by reflection, without the immediate intervention of feeling, which supersedes reflection, our determination as to the right would consist in an adjustment of our individual needs to the dire necessities of our lot, partly as to our natural constitution, partly as sharers of life with our fellow-beings. Tragedy consists in the terrible difficulty of this adjustment, —

> " 'The dire strife of poor Humanity's afflicted will,
> Struggling in vain with ruthless destiny.'

Looking at individual lots, I seemed to see in each the same story, wrought out with more or less of tragedy, and I determined the elements of my drama under the influence of these ideas.

"In order to judge properly of the dramatic structure it must not be considered first in the light of doctrinal symbolism, but in the light of a tragedy representing some grand collision in the human lot. And it must be judged accordingly. A good tragic subject must represent a possible, sufficiently probable, not a common, action; and to be really tragic, it must represent irreparable collision between the individual and the general (in differing degrees of generality). It is the individual with whom we sympathize, and the general of which we recognize the irresistible power. The truth of this test will be seen by applying it to the greatest tragedies. The collision of Greek tragedy is often that between hereditary, entailed Nemesis and the peculiar individual lot, awakening our sympathy, of the particular man or woman whom the Nemesis is shown to grasp with terrific force. Sometimes, as in the Oresteia, there is the clashing of two irreconcilable requirements, — two duties, as we should say in these times. The murder of the father must be avenged by the murder of the mother, which must again be avenged. These two tragic relations of the individual and general, and of two irreconcilable 'oughts,' may be — will be — seen to be almost always combined. The Greeks were not taking an artificial, entirely erroneous standpoint in their art, — a standpoint which disappeared altogether with their religion and their art. They had the same essential elements of life presented to them as we have, and their art symbolized these in grand schematic forms. The Prometheus represents the ineffectual struggle to redeem the small and miserable race of man, against the stronger adverse ordinances that govern the frame of things with a triumphant power. Coming to modern tragedies, what

is it that makes Othello a great tragic subject? A story simply of a jealous husband is elevated into a most pathetic tragedy by the hereditary conditions of Othello's lot, which give him a subjective ground for distrust. Faust, Rigoletto ('Le Roi s'Amuse'), Brutus. It might be a reasonable ground of objection against the whole structure of 'The Spanish Gypsy,' if it were shown that the action is outrageously improbable, — lying outside all that can be congruously conceived of human actions. It is *not* a reasonable ground of objection that they would have done better to act otherwise, any more than it is a reasonable objection against the Iphigenia that Agamemnon would have done better not to sacrifice his daughter.

"As renunciations coming under the same great class, take the renunciation of marriage where marriage cannot take place without entailing misery on the children.

"A tragedy has not to expound why the individual must give way to the general; it has to show that it is compelled to give way, — the tragedy consisting in the struggle involved, and often in the entirely calamitous issue in spite of a grand submission. Silva presents the tragedy of entire rebellion; Fedalma, of a grand submission, which is rendered vain by the effects of Silva's rebellion; Zarca, the struggle for a great end, rendered vain by the surrounding conditions of life.

"Now, what is the fact about our individual lots? A woman, say, finds herself on the earth with an inherited organization: she may be lame, she may inherit a disease, or what is tantamount to a disease; she may be a negress, or have other marks of race repulsive in the community where she is born, etc. One may go on for a long while without reaching the limits of the commonest inherited misfortunes. It is almost a mockery to say to such human beings, 'Seek your own happiness.' The utmost approach to well-being that can be made in such a case is through large resignation and

acceptance of the inevitable, with as much effort to overcome any disadvantage as good sense will show to be attended with a likelihood of success. Any one may say, that is the dictate of mere rational reflection. But calm can in hardly any human organism be attained by rational reflection. Happily, we are not left to that. Love, pity, constituting sympathy, and generous joy with regard to the lot of our fellow-men comes in, — has been growing since the beginning, — enormously enhanced by wider vision of results, by an imagination actively interested in the lot of mankind generally; and these feelings become piety, — that is, loving, willing submission and heroic Promethean effort towards high possibilities, which may result from our individual life.

"There is really no moral 'sanction' but this inward impulse. The will of God is the same thing as the will of other men, compelling us to work and avoid what they have seen to be harmful to social existence. Disjoined from any perceived good, the divine will is simply so much as we have ascertained of the facts of existence which compel obedience at our peril. Any other notion comes from the supposition of arbitrary revelation.

"That favorite view, expressed so often in Clough's poems, of doing duty in blindness as to the result, is likely to deepen the substitution of egoistic yearnings for really moral impulses. We cannot be utterly blind to the results of duty, since that cannot be duty which is not already judged to be for human good. To say the contrary is to say that mankind have reached no inductions as to what is for their good or evil.

"The art which leaves the soul in despair is laming to the soul, and is denounced by the healthy sentiment of an active community. The consolatory elements in 'The Spanish Gypsy' are derived from two convictions or sentiments which so conspicuously pervade it that they may be said to be

its very warp, on which the whole action is woven. These are: (1) The importance of individual deeds; (2) The all-sufficiency of the soul's passions in determining sympathetic action.

"In Silva is presented the claim of fidelity to social pledges; in Fedalma, the claim constituted by an hereditary lot less consciously shared.

"With regard to the supremacy of love: if it were a fact without exception that man or woman never did renounce the joys of love, there could never have sprung up a notion that such renunciation could present itself as a duty. If no parents had ever cared for their children, how could parental affection have been reckoned among the elements of life? But what are the facts in relation to this matter? Will any one say that faithfulness to the marriage tie has never been regarded as a duty, in spite of the presence of the profoundest passion experienced after marriage? Is Guinevere's conduct the type of duty?"

THE SPANISH GYPSY.

POEMS

OF

GEORGE ELIOT.

THE SPANISH GYPSY.

BOOK I.

'TIS the warm South, where Europe spreads her lands
Like fretted leaflets, breathing on the deep:
Broad-breasted Spain, leaning with equal love
(A calm earth-goddess crowned with corn and vines)
On the Mid Sea that moans with memories,
And on the untravelled Ocean, whose vast tides
Pant dumbly passionate with dreams of youth.
This river, shadowed by the battlements
And gleaming silvery towards the northern sky,
Feeds the famed stream that waters Andalus
And loiters, amorous of the fragrant air,
By Córdova and Seville to the bay
Fronting Algarva and the wandering flood
Of Guadiana. This deep mountain gorge
Slopes widening on the olive-pluméd plains
Of fair Granáda: one far-stretching arm
Points to Elvira, one to eastward heights
Of Alpujarras where the new-bathed Day
With oriflamme uplifted o'er the peaks

Saddens the breasts of northward-looking snows
That loved the night, and soared with soaring stars;
Flashing the signals of his nearing swiftness
From Almería's purple-shadowed bay
On to the far-off rocks that gaze and glow, —
On to Alhambra, strong and ruddy heart
Of glorious Morisma, gasping now,
A maiméd giant in his agony.
This town that dips its feet within the stream,
And seems to sit a tower-crowned Cybele,
Spreading her ample robe adown the rocks,
Is rich Bedmár: 't was Moorish long ago,
But now the Cross is sparkling on the Mosque,
And bells make Catholic the trembling air.
The fortress gleams in Spanish sunshine now
('T is south a mile before the rays are Moorish), —
Hereditary jewel, agraffe bright
On all the many-titled privilege
Of young Duke Silva. No Castilian knight
That serves Queen Isabel has higher charge;
For near this frontier sits the Moorish king,
Not Boabdil the waverer, who usurps
A throne he trembles in, and fawning licks
The feet of conquerors, but that fierce lion
Grisly El Zagal, who has made his lair
In Guadix' fort, and rushing thence with strength,
Half his own fierceness, half the untainted heart
Of mountain bands that fight for holiday,
Wastes the fair lands that lie by Alcalá,
Wreathing his horse's neck with Christian heads.

To keep the Christian frontier, — such high trust
Is young Duke Silva's; and the time is great.
(What times are little? To the sentinel
That hour is regal when he mounts on guard.)

The fifteenth century since the Man Divine
Taught and was hated in Capernaum
Is near its end, — is falling as a husk
Away from all the fruit its years have ripened.
The Moslem faith, now flickering like a torch
In a night struggle on this shore of Spain,
Glares, a broad column of advancing flame,
Along the Danube and the Illyrian shore
Far into Italy, where eager monks,
Who watch in dreams and dream the while they watch,
See Christ grow paler in the baleful light,
Crying again the cry of the forsaken.
But faith, the stronger for extremity,
Becomes prophetic, hears the far-off tread
Of western chivalry, sees downward sweep
The archangel Michael with the gleaming sword,
And listens for the shriek of hurrying fiends
Chased from their revels in God's sanctuary.
So trusts the monk, and lifts appealing eyes
To the high dome, the Church's firmament,
Where the blue light-pierced curtain, rolled away,
Reveals the throne and Him who sits thereon.
So trust the men whose best hope for the world
Is ever that the world is near its end:
Impatient of the stars that keep their course
And make no pathway for the coming Judge.

But other futures stir the world's great heart.
The West now enters on the heritage
Won from the tombs of mighty ancestors,
The seeds, the gold, the gems, the silent harps
That lay deep buried with the memories
Of old renown.
No more, as once in sunny Avignon,
The poet-scholar spreads the Homeric page,

And gazes sadly, like the deaf at song;
For now the old epic voices ring again
And vibrate with the beat and melody
Stirred by the warmth of old Ionian days.
The martyred sage, the Attic orator,
Immortally incarnate, like the gods,
In spiritual bodies, wingéd words
Holding a universe impalpable,
Find a new audience. Forevermore,
With grander resurrection than was feigned
Of Attila's fierce Huns, the soul of Greece
Conquers the bulk of Persia. The maimed form
Of calmly joyous beauty, marble-limbed,
Yet breathing with the thought that shaped its lips,
Looks mild reproach from out its opened grave
At creeds of terror; and the vine-wreathed god
Rising, a stifled question from the silence,
Fronts the pierced Image with the crown of thorns.
The soul of man is widening towards the past:
No longer hanging at the breast of life
Feeding in blindness to his parentage, —
Quenching all wonder with Omnipotence,
Praising a name with indolent piety, —
He spells the record of his long descent,
More largely conscious of the life that was.
And from the height that shows where morning shone
On far-off summits pale and gloomy now,
The horizon widens round him, and the west
Looks vast with untracked waves whereon his gaze
Follows the flight of the swift-vanished bird
That like the sunken sun is mirrored still
Upon the yearning soul within the eye.
And so in Córdova through patient nights
Columbus watches, or he sails in dreams
Between the setting stars and finds new day;

Then wakes again to the old weary days,
Girds on the cord and frock of pale Saint Francis,
And like him zealous pleads with foolish men.
"I ask but for a million maravedis:
Give me three caravels to find a world,
New shores, new realms, new soldiers for the Cross.
Son cosas grandes!" Thus he pleads in vain;
Yet faints not utterly, but pleads anew,
Thinking, "God means it, and has chosen me."
For this man is the pulse of all mankind
Feeding an embryo future, offspring strange
Of the fond Present, that with mother-prayers
And mother-fancies looks for championship
Of all her loved beliefs and old-world ways
From that young Time she bears within her womb.
The sacred places shall be purged again,
The Turk converted and the Holy Church,
Like the mild Virgin with the outspread robe,
Shall fold all tongues and nations lovingly.

But since God works by armies, who shall be
The modern Cyrus? Is it France most Christian,
Who with his lilies and brocaded knights,
French oaths, French vices, and the newest style
Of out-puffed sleeve, shall pass from west to east,
A winnowing fan to purify the seed
For fair millennial harvests soon to come?
Or is not Spain the land of chosen warriors? —
Crusaders consecrated from the womb,
Carrying the sword-cross stamped upon their souls
By the long yearnings of a nation's life,
Through all the seven patient centuries
Since first Pelayo and his resolute band
Trusted the God within their Gothic hearts
At Covadunga, and defied Mahound:

Beginning so the Holy War of Spain
That now is panting with the eagerness
Of labor near its end. The silver cross
Glitters o'er Malaga and streams dread light
On Moslem galleys, turning all their stores
From threats to gifts. What Spanish knight is he
Who, living now, holds it not shame to live
Apart from that hereditary battle
Which needs his sword? Castilian gentlemen
Choose not their task, — they choose to do it well.

The time is great, and greater no man's trust
Than his who keeps the fortress for his king,
Wearing great honors as some delicate robe
Brocaded o'er with names 't were sin to tarnish.
Born de la Cerda, Calatravan knight,
Count of Segura, fourth Duke of Bedmár,
Offshoot from that high stock of old Castile
Whose topmost branch is proud Medina Celi, —
Such titles with their blazonry are his
Who keeps this fortress, sworn Alcaÿde,
Lord of the valley, master of the town,
Commanding whom he will, himself commanded
By Christ his Lord who sees him from the Cross
And from bright heaven where the Mother pleads; —
By good Saint James upon the milk-white steed,
Who leaves his bliss to fight for chosen Spain; —
By the dead gaze of all his ancestors; —
And by the mystery of his Spanish blood
Charged with the awe and glories of the past.
See now with soldiers in his front and rear
He winds at evening through the narrow streets
That toward the Castle gate climb devious:
His charger, of fine Andalusian stock,
An Indian beauty, black but delicate,

Is conscious of the herald trumpet note,
The gathering glances, and familiar ways
That lead fast homeward: she forgets fatigue,
And at the light touch of the master's spur
Thrills with the zeal to bear him royally,
Arches her neck and clambers up the stones
As if disdainful of the difficult steep.
Night-black the charger, black the rider's plume,
But all between is bright with morning hues, —
Seems ivory and gold and deep blue gems,
And starry flashing steel and pale vermilion,
All set in jasper: on his surcoat white
Glitter the swordbelt and the jewelled hilt,
Red on the back and breast the holy cross,
And 'twixt the helmet and the soft-spun white
Thick tawny wavelets like the lion's mane
Turn backward from his brow, pale, wide, erect,
Shadowing blue eyes, — blue as the rain-washed sky
That braced the early stem of Gothic kings
He claims for ancestry. A goodly knight,
A noble caballero, broad of chest
And long of limb. So much the August sun,
Now in the west but shooting half its beams
Past a dark rocky profile toward the plain,
At winding opportunities across the slope
Makes suddenly luminous for all who see;
For women smiling from the terraced roofs;
For boys that prone on trucks with head up-propped,
Lazy and curious, stare irreverent;
For men who make obeisance with degrees
Of good-will shading towards servility,
Where good-will ends and secret fear begins,
And curses, too, low-muttered through the teeth,
Explanatory to the God of Shem.

Five, grouped within a whitened tavern court
Of Moorish fashion, where the trellised vines
Purpling above their heads make odorous shade,
Note through the open door the passers-by,
Getting some rills of novelty to speed
The lagging stream of talk and help the wine.
'T is Christian to drink wine: whoso denies
His flesh at bidding save of Holy Church,
Let him beware and take to Christian sins
Lest he be taxed with Moslem sanctity.

The souls are five, the talkers only three.
(No time, most tainted by wrong faith and rule,
But holds some listeners and dumb animals.)
Mine Host is one: he with the well-arched nose,
Soft-eyed, fat-handed, loving men for naught
But his own humor, patting old and young
Upon the back, and mentioning the cost
With confidential blandness, as a tax
That he collected much against his will
From Spaniards who were all his bosom friends:
Warranted Christian, — else how keep an inn,
Which calling asks true faith? though like his wine
Of cheaper sort, a trifle over-new.
His father was a convert, chose the chrism
As men choose physic, kept his chimney warm
With smokiest wood upon a Saturday,
Counted his gains and grudges on a chaplet,
And crossed himself asleep for fear of spies;
Trusting the God of Israel would see
'T was Christian tyranny that made him base.
Our host his son was born ten years too soon,
Had heard his mother call him Ephraim,
Knew holy things from common, thought it sin
To feast on days when Israel's children mourned,

So had to be converted with his sire,
To doff the awe he learned as Ephraim,
And suit his manners to a Christian name.
But infant awe, that unborn breathing thing,
Dies with what nourished it, can never rise
From the dead womb and walk and seek new pasture.
Baptism seemed to him a merry game
Not tried before, all sacraments a mode
Of doing homage for one's property,
And all religions a queer human whim
Or else a vice, according to degrees:
As, 't is a whim to like your chestnuts hot,
Burn your own mouth and draw your face awry,
A vice to pelt frogs with them, — animals
Content to take life coolly. And Lorenzo
Would have all lives made easy, even lives
Of spiders and inquisitors, yet still
Wishing so well to flies and Moors and Jews,
He rather wished the others easy death;
For loving all men clearly was deferred
Till all men loved each other. Such mine Host,
With chiselled smile caressing Seneca,
The solemn mastiff leaning on his knee.

His right-hand guest is solemn as the dog,
Square-faced and massive: Blasco is his name,
A prosperous silversmith from Aragon;
In speech not silvery, rather tuned as notes
From a deep vessel made of plenteous iron,
Or some great bell of slow but certain swing
That, if you only wait, will tell the hour
As well as flippant clocks that strike in haste
And set off chiming a superfluous tune, —
Like Juan there, the spare man with the lute,
Who makes you dizzy with his rapid tongue,

Whirring athwart your mind with comment swift
On speech you would have finished by and by,
Shooting your bird for you while you are loading,
Cheapening your wisdom as a pattern known,
Woven by any shuttle on demand.
Can never sit quite still, too: sees a wasp
And kills it with a movement like a flash;
Whistles low notes or seems to thrum his lute
As a mere hyphen 'twixt two syllables
Of any steadier man; walks up and down
And snuffs the orange flowers and shoots a pea
To hit a streak of light let through the awning.
Has a queer face: eyes large as plums, a nose
Small, round, uneven, like a bit of wax
Melted and cooled by chance. Thin-fingered, lithe,
And as a squirrel noiseless, startling men
Only by quickness. In his speech and look
A touch of graceful wildness, as of things
Not trained or tamed for uses of the world;
Most like the Fauns that roamed in days of old
About the listening whispering woods, and shared
The subtler sense of sylvan ears and eyes
Undulled by scheming thought, yet joined the rout
Of men and women on the festal days,
And played the syrinx too, and knew love's pains,
Turning their anguish into melody.
For Juan was a minstrel still, in times
When minstrelsy was held a thing outworn.
Spirits seem buried and their epitaph
Is writ in Latin by severest pens,
Yet still they flit above the trodden grave
And find new bodies, animating them
In quaint and ghostly way with antique souls.
So Juan was a troubadour revived,
Freshening life's dusty road with babbling rills

Of wit and song, living 'mid harnessed men
With limbs ungalled by armor, ready so
To soothe them weary, and to cheer them sad.
Guest at the board, companion in the camp,
A crystal mirror to the life around,
Flashing the comment keen of simple fact
Defined in words; lending brief lyric voice
To grief and sadness; hardly taking note
Of difference betwixt his own and others';
But rather singing as a listener
To the deep moans, the cries, the wild strong joys
Of universal Nature, old yet young.
Such Juan, the third talker, shimmering bright
As butterfly or bird with quickest life.

The silent ROLDAN has his brightness too,
But only in his spangles and rosettes.
His party-colored vest and crimson hose
Are dulled with old Valencian dust, his eyes
With straining fifty years at gilded balls
To catch them dancing, or with brazen looks
At men and women as he made his jests
Some thousand times and watched to count the pence
His wife was gathering. His olive face
Has an old writing in it, characters
Stamped deep by grins that had no merriment,
The soul's rude mark proclaiming all its blank;
As on some faces that have long grown old
In lifting tapers up to forms obscene
On ancient walls and chuckling with false zest
To please my lord, who gives the larger fee
For that hard industry in apishness.
Roldan would gladly never laugh again;
Pensioned, he would be grave as any ox,
And having beans and crumbs and oil secured

Would borrow no man's jokes forevermore.
'T is harder now because his wife is gone,
Who had quick feet, and danced to ravishment
Of every ring jewelled with Spanish eyes,
But died and left this boy, lame from his birth,
And sad and obstinate, though when he will
He sings God-taught such marrow-thrilling strains
As seem the very voice of dying Spring,
A flute-like wail that mourns the blossoms gone,
And sinks, and is not, like their fragrant breath
With fine transition on the trembling air.
He sits as if imprisoned by some fear,
Motionless, with wide eyes that seem not made
For hungry glancing of a twelve-yeared boy
To mark the living thing that he could tease,
But for the gaze of some primeval sadness
Dark twin with light in the creative ray.
This little PABLO has his spangles too,
And large rosettes to hide his poor left foot
Rounded like any hoof (his mother thought
God willed it so to punish all her sins).

I said the souls were five, — besides the dog.
But there was still a sixth, with wrinkled face,
Grave and disgusted with all merriment
Not less than Roldan. It is ANNIBAL,
The experienced monkey who performs the tricks,
Jumps through the hoops, and carries round the hat.
Once full of sallies and impromptu feats,
Now cautious not to light on aught that 's new,
Lest he be whipped to do it o'er again
From A to Z, and make the gentry laugh:
A misanthropic monkey, gray and grim,
Bearing a lot that has no remedy
For want of concert in the monkey tribe.

We see the company, above their heads
The braided matting, golden as ripe corn,
Stretched in a curving strip close by the grapes,
Elsewhere rolled back to greet the cooler sky;
A fountain near, vase-shapen and broad-lipped,
Where timorous birds alight with tiny feet,
And hesitate and bend wise listening ears,
And fly away again with undipped beak.
On the stone floor the juggler's heaped-up goods,
Carpet and hoops, viol and tambourine,
Where Annibal sits perched with brows severe,
A serious ape whom none take seriously,
Obliged in this fool's world to earn his nuts
By hard buffoonery. We see them all,
And hear their talk, — the talk of Spanish men,
With Southern intonation, vowels turned
Caressingly between the consonants,
Persuasive, willing, with such intervals
As music borrows from the wooing birds,
That plead with subtly curving, sweet descent, —
And yet can quarrel, as these Spaniards can.

JUAN (*near the doorway*).

You hear the trumpet? There 's old Ramon's blast.
No bray but his can shake the air so well.
He takes his trumpeting as solemnly
As angel charged to wake the dead; thinks war
Was made for trumpeters, and their great art
Made solely for themselves who understand it.
His features all have shaped themselves to blowing,
And when his trumpet 's bagged or left at home
He seems a chattel in a broker's booth,
A spoutless watering-can, a promise to pay
No sum particular. O fine old Ramon!
The blasts get louder and the clattering hoofs;

Then he will know the quality of mine.
I 've ware for tables and for altars too,
Our Lady in all sizes, crosses, bells:
He 'll need such weapons full as much as swords
If he would capture any Moorish town.
For, let me tell you, when a mosque is cleansed . . . .

JUAN.

The demons fly so thick from sound of bells
And smell of incense, you may see the air
Streaked with them as with smoke. Why, they are spirits:
You may well think how crowded they must be
To make a sort of haze.

BLASCO.

I knew not that.
Still, they 're of smoky nature, demons are;
And since you say so, — well, it proves the more
The need of bells and censers. Ay, your Duke
Sat well: a true hidalgo. I can judge, —
Of harness specially. I saw the camp,
The royal camp at Velez Malaga.
'T was like the court of heaven, — such liveries!
And torches carried by the score at night
Before the nobles. Sirs, I made a dish
To set an emerald in would fit a crown,
For Don Alonzo, lord of Aguilar.
Your Duke 's no whit behind him in his mien
Or harness either. But you seem to say
The people love him not.

HOST.

They 've naught against him.
But certain winds will make men's temper bad.

When the Solano blows hot venomed breath,
It acts upon men's knives: steel takes to stabbing
Which else, with cooler winds, were honest steel,
Cutting but garlick. There 's a wind just now
Blows right from Seville —

BLASCO.

Ay, you mean the wind . . . .
Yes, yes, a wind that 's rather hot . . . .

HOST.

With fagots.

JUAN.

A wind that suits not with our townsmen's blood.
Abram, 't is said, objected to be scorched,
And, as the learned Arabs vouch, he gave
The antipathy in full to Ishmaël.
'T is true, these patriarchs had their oddities.

BLASCO.

Their oddities? I 'm of their mind, I know.
Though, as to Abraham and Ishmaël,
I 'm an old Christian, and owe naught to them
Or any Jew among them. But I know
We made a stir in Saragossa — we:
The men of Aragon ring hard, — true metal.
Sirs, I 'm no friend to heresy, but then
A Christian's money is not safe. As how?
A lapsing Jew or any heretic
May owe me twenty ounces: suddenly
He 's prisoned, suffers penalties, — 't is well:
If men will not believe, 't is good to make them,
But let the penalties fall on them alone.
The Jew is stripped, his goods are confiscate;
Now, where, I pray you, go my twenty ounces?

God knows, and perhaps the King may, but not I
And more, my son may lose his young wife's dower
Because 't was promised since her father's soul
Fell to wrong thinking. How was I to know?
I could but use my sense and cross myself.
Christian is Christian, — I give in, — but still
Taxing is taxing, though you call it holy.
We Saragossans liked not this new tax
They call the — nonsense, I 'm from Aragon!
I speak too bluntly. But, for Holy Church,
No man believes more.

HOST.

Nay, sir, never fear.
Good Master Roldan here is no delator.

ROLDAN (*starting from a reverie*).

You speak to me, sirs? I perform to-night —
The Plaça Santiago. Twenty tricks,
All different. I dance, too. And the boy
Sings like a bird. I crave your patronage.

BLASCO.

Faith, you shall have it, sir. In travelling
I take a little freedom, and am gay.
You marked not what I said just now?

ROLDAN.

I? no.
I pray your pardon. I've a twinging knee,
That makes it hard to listen. You were saying?

BLASCO.

Nay, it was naught. (*Aside to* HOST.) Is it his deepness?

HOST.

No.
He 's deep in nothing but his poverty.

BLASCO.

But 't was his poverty that made me think . . . .

HOST.

His piety might wish to keep the feasts
As well as fasts. No fear; he hears not.

BLASCO.

Good.
I speak my mind about the penalties,
But, look you, I 'm against assassination.
You know my meaning — Master Arbués,
The grand Inquisitor in Aragon.
I knew naught, — paid no copper towards the deed.
But I was there, at prayers, within the church.
How could I help it? Why, the saints were there,
And looked straight on above the altars. I . . . .

JUAN.

Looked carefully the other way.

BLASCO.

Why, at my beads.
'T was after midnight, and the canons all
Were chanting matins. I was not in church
To gape and stare. I saw the martyr kneel:
I never liked the look of him alive, —
He was no martyr then. I thought he made
An ugly shadow as he crept athwart
The bands of light, then passed within the gloom
By the broad pillar. 'T was in our great Seo,
At Saragossa. The pillars tower so large
You cross yourself to see them, lest white Death
Should hide behind their dark. And so it was.

I looked away again and told my beads
Unthinkingly; but still a man has ears;
And right across the chanting came a sound
As if a tree had crashed above the roar
Of some great torrent. So it seemed to me;
For when you listen long and shut your eyes
Small sounds get thunderous. And he 'd a shell
Like any lobster: a good iron suit
From top to toe beneath the innocent serge.
That made the telltale sound. But then came shrieks
The chanting stopped and turned to rushing feet,
And in the midst lay Master Arbués,
Felled like an ox. 'T was wicked butchery.
Some honest men had hoped it would have scared
The Inquisition out of Aragon.
'T was money thrown away, — I would say, crime, —
Clean thrown away.

HOST.

That was a pity now.
Next to a missing thrust, what irks me most
Is a neat well-aimed stroke that kills your man,
Yet ends in mischief, — as in Aragon.
It was a lesson to our people here.
Else there 's a monk within our city walls,
A holy, high-born, stern Dominican,
They might have made the great mistake to kill.

BLASCO.

What! is he? ....

HOST.

Yes; a Master Arbués
Of finer quality. The Prior here
And uncle to our Duke

BLASCO.

He will want plate:
A holy pillar or a crucifix.
But, did you say, he was like Arbués?

JUAN.

As a black eagle with gold beak and claws
Is like a raven. Even in his cowl,
Covered from head to foot, the Prior is known
From all the black herd round. When he uncovers
And stands white-frocked, with ivory face, his eyes
Black-gleaming, black his coronet of hair
Like shredded jasper, he seems less a man
With struggling aims than pure incarnate Will,
Fit to subdue rebellious nations, nay,
That human flesh he breathes in, charged with passion
Which quivers in his nostril and his lip,
But disciplined by long-indwelling will
To silent labor in the yoke of law.
A truce to thy comparisons, Lorenzo!
Thine is no subtle nose for difference;
'T is dulled by feigning and civility.

HOST.

Pooh, thou 'rt a poet, crazed with finding words
May stick to things and seem like qualities.
No pebble is a pebble in thy hands:
'T is a moon out of work, a barren egg,
Or twenty things that no man sees but thee.
Our father Isidor 's — a living saint,
And that is heresy, some townsmen think:
Saints should be dead, according to the Church.
My mind is this: the Father is so holy
'T were sin to wish his soul detained from bliss.
Easy translation to the realms above.

The shortest journey to the seventh heaven,
Is what I 'd never grudge him.

BLASCO.

Piously said.
Look you, I 'm dutiful, obey the Church
When there 's no help for it: I mean to say,
When Pope and Bishop and all customers
Order alike. But there be bishops now,
And were aforetime, who have held it wrong,
This hurry to convert the Jews. As, how?
Your Jew pays tribute to the bishop, say.
That 's good, and must please God, to see the Church
Maintained in ways that ease the Christian's purse.
Convert the Jew, and where 's the tribute, pray?
He lapses, too: 't is slippery work, conversion:
And then the holy taxing carries off
His money at one sweep. No tribute more!
He 's penitent or burnt, and there 's an end.
Now guess which pleases God ....

JUAN.

Whether he likes
A well-burnt Jew or well-fed bishop best.

[While Juan put this problem theologic
Entered, with resonant step, another guest,—
A soldier: all his keenness in his sword,
His eloquence in scars upon his cheek,
His virtue in much slaying of the Moor:
With brow well-creased in horizontal folds
To save the space, as having naught to do:
Lips prone to whistle whisperingly,—no tune.
But trotting rhythm: meditative eyes,
Most often fixed upon his legs and spurs:

Invited much, and held good company:
Styled Captain Lopez.]

LOPEZ.

At your service, sirs.

JUAN.

Ha, Lopez? Why, thou hast a face full-charged
As any herald's. What news of the wars?

LOPEZ.

Such news as is most bitter on my tongue.

JUAN.

Then spit it forth.

HOST.

Sit, Captain: here 's a cup,
Fresh-filled. What news?

LOPEZ.

'T is bad. We make no sally
We sit still here and wait whate'er the Moor
Shall please to do.

HOST.

Some townsmen will be glad.

LOPEZ.

Glad, will they be? But I 'm not glad, not I,
Nor any Spanish soldier of clean blood.
But the Duke's wisdom is to wait a siege
Instead of laying one. Therefore — meantime —
He will be married straightway.

HOST.

Ha, ha, ha!
Thy speech is like an hourglass; turn it down
The other way, 't will stand as well, and say
The Duke will wed, therefore he waits a siege.
But what say Don Diego and the Prior?
The holy uncle and the fiery Don?

LOPEZ.

Oh there be sayings running all abroad
As thick as nuts o'erturned. No man need lack.
Some say, 't was letters changed the Duke's intent:
From Malaga, says Blas. From Rome, says Quintin.
From spies at Guadix, says Sebastian.
Some say, 't is all a pretext, — say, the Duke
Is but a lapdog hanging on a skirt,
Turning his eyeballs upward like a monk:
'T was Don Diego said that, — so says Blas;
Last week, he said . . . .

JUAN.

Oh do without the "said"!
Open thy mouth and pause in lieu of it.
I had as lief be pelted with a pea
Irregularly in the selfsame spot
As hear such iteration without rule,
Such torture of uncertain certainty.

LOPEZ.

Santiago! Juan, thou art hard to please.
I speak not for my own delighting, I.
I can be silent, I.

BLASCO.

Nay, sir, speak on!
I like your matter well. I deal in plate.
This wedding touches me. Who is the bride?

LOPEZ.

One that some say the Duke does ill to wed.
One that his mother reared — God rest her soul! —
Duchess Diana, — she who died last year.
A bird picked up away from any nest.
Her name — the Duchess gave it — is Fedalma.
No harm in that. But the Duke stoops, they say,
In wedding her. And that's the simple truth.

JUAN.

Thy simple truth is but a false opinion:
The simple truth of asses who believe
Their thistle is the very best of food.
Fie, Lopez, thou a Spaniard with a sword
Dreamest a Spanish noble ever stoops
By doing honor to the maid he loves!
He stoops alone when he dishonors her.

LOPEZ.

Nay, I said naught against her.

JUAN.

Better not.
Else I would challenge thee to fight with wits,
And spear thee through and through ere thou couldst draw
The bluntest word. Yes, yes, consult thy spurs:
Spurs are a sign of knighthood, and should tell thee
That knightly love is blent with reverence
As heavenly air is blent with heavenly blue.
Don Silva's heart beats to a chivalric tune:
He wills no highest-born Castilian dame,
Betrothed to highest noble, should be held
More sacred than Fedalma. He enshrines

Her virgin image for the general worship
And for his own, — will guard her from the world,
Nay, his profaner self, lest he should lose
The place of his religion. He does well.
Naught can come closer to the poets' strain.

HOST.

Or further from their practice, Juan, eh?
If thou 'rt a specimen?

JUAN.

Wrong, my Lorenzo!
Touching Fedalma the poor poet plays
A finer part even than the noble Duke.

LOPEZ.

By making ditties, singing with round mouth
Likest a crowing cock? Thou meanest that?

JUAN.

Lopez, take physic, thou art getting ill,
Growing descriptive; 't is unnatural.
I mean, Don Silva's love expects reward,
Kneels with a heaven to come; but the poor poet
Worships without reward, nor hopes to find
A heaven save in his worship. He adores
The sweetest woman for her sweetness' sake,
Joys in the love that was not born for him,
Because 't is lovingness, as beggars joy,
Warming their naked limbs on wayside walls,
To hear a tale of princes and their glory.
There 's a poor poet (poor, I mean, in coin)
Worships Fedalma with so true a love
That if her silken robe were changed for rags,

And she were driven out to stony wilds
Barefoot, a scornéd wanderer, he would kiss
Her ragged garment's edge, and only ask
For leave to be her slave. Digest that, friend,
Or let it lie upon thee as a weight
To check light thinking of Fedalma.

LOPEZ.

I?

I think no harm of her; I thank the saints
I wear a sword and peddle not in thinking.
'T is Father Marcos says she 'll not confess
And loves not holy water; says her blood
Is infidel; says the Duke's wedding her
Is union of light with darkness.

JUAN.

Tush!

[Now Juan — who by snatches touched his lute
With soft arpeggio, like a whispered dream
Of sleeping music, while he spoke of love, —
In jesting anger at the soldier's talk
Thrummed loud and fast, thén faster and more loud
Till, as he answered, "Tush!" he struck a chord
Sudden as whip-crack close by Lopez' ear.
Mine host and Blasco smiled, the mastiff barked,
Roldan looked up and Annibal looked down,
Cautiously neutral in so new a case;
The boy raised longing, listening eyes that seemed
An exiled spirit's waiting in strained hope
Of voices coming from the distant land.
But Lopez bore the assault like any rock:
That was not what he drew his sword at — he!
He spoke with neck erect.]

LOPEZ.

If that 's a hint
The company should ask thee for a song,
Sing, then!

HOST.

Ay, Juan, sing, and jar no more.
Something brand new. Thou 'rt wont to make my ear
A test of novelties. Hast thou aught fresh?

JUAN.

As fresh as rain-drops. Here 's a Cancion
Springs like a tiny mushroom delicate
Out of the priest's foul scandal of Fedalma.

[He preluded with questioning intervals,
Rising, then falling just a semitone,
In minor cadence, — sound with poiséd wing
Hovering and quivering towards the needed fall.
Then in a voice that shook the willing air
With masculine vibration sang this song.

Should I long that dark were fair?
Say, O song!
Lacks my love aught, that I should long?

Dark the night, with breath all flow'rs,
And tender broken voice that fills
With ravishment the listening hours:
Whisperings, wooings,
Liquid ripples and soft ring-dove cooings
In low-toned rhythm that love's aching stills.
Dark the night,
Yet is she bright,
For in her dark she brings the mystic star,
Trembling yet strong, as is the voice of love,
From some unknown afar.

O radiant Dark! O darkly fostered ray!
Thou hast a joy too deep for shallow Day.

While Juan sang, all round the tavern court
Gathered a constellation of black eyes.
Fat Lola leaned upon the balcony
With arms that might have pillowed Hercules
(Who built, 't is known, the mightiest Spanish towns):
Thin Alda's face, sad as a wasted passion,
Leaned o'er the nodding baby's; 'twixt the rails
The little Pepe showed his two black beads,
His flat-ringed hair and small Semitic nose
Complete and tiny as a new-born minnow;
Patting his head and holding in her arms
The baby senior, stood Lorenzo's wife
All negligent, her kerchief discomposed
By little clutches, woman's coquetry
Quite turned to mother's cares and sweet content.
These on the balcony, while at the door
Gazed the lank boys and lazy-shouldered men.
'T is likely too the rats and insects peeped,
Being southern Spanish ready for a lounge.
The singer smiled, as doubtless Orpheus smiled,
To see the animals both great and small,
The mountainous elephant and scampering mouse,
Held by the ears in decent audience;
Then, when mine host desired the strain once more,
He fell to preluding with rhythmic change
Of notes recurrent, soft as pattering drops
That fall from off the eaves in faëry dance
When clouds are breaking; till at measured pause
He struck, in rare responsive chords, a réfrain.]

HOST.

Come, then, a gayer rómaunt, if thou wilt:
I quarrel not with change. What say you, Captain?

LOPEZ.

All 's one to me. I note no change of tune,
Not I, save in the ring of horses' hoofs,
Or in the drums and trumpets when they call
To action or retreat. I ne'er could see
The good of singing.

BLASCO.

Why, it passes time, —
Saves you from getting over-wise: that 's good.
For, look you, fools are merry here below,
Yet they will go to heaven all the same,
Having the sacraments; and, look you, heaven
Is a long holiday, and solid men,
Used to much business, might be ill at ease
Not liking play. And so in travelling
I shape myself betimes to idleness
And take fools' pleasures . . . .

HOST.

Hark, the song begins!

JUAN (*sings*).

Maiden, crowned with glossy blackness,
Lithe as panther forest-roaming,
Long-armed naiad, when she dances,
On a stream of ether floating, —
Bright, O bright Fedalma!

Form all curves like softness drifted,
Wave-kissed marble roundly dimpling,
Far-off music slowly wingéd,
Gently rising, gently sinking, —
Bright, O bright Fedalma!

Pure as rain-tear on a rose-leaf,
Cloud high-born in noonday spotless,
Sudden perfect as the dew-bead,
Gem of earth and sky begotten,—
Bright, O bright Fedalma!

Beauty has no mortal father,
Holy light her form engendered
Out of tremor, yearning, gladness,
Presage sweet and joy remembered,—
Child of Light, Fedalma!

BLASCO.

Faith, a good song, sung to a stirring tune.
I like the words returning in a round;
It gives a sort of sense. Another such!

ROLDAN (*rising*).

Sirs, you will hear my boy. 'T is very hard
When gentles sing for naught to all the town.
How can a poor man live? And now 't is time
I go to the Plaça, — who will give me pence
When he can hear hidalgos and give naught?

JUAN.

True, friend. Be pacified. I 'll sing no more.
Go thou, and we will follow. Never fear.
My voice is common as the ivy leaves,
Plucked in all seasons, — bears no price; the boy's
Is like the almond blossoms. Ah, he 's lame!

HOST.

Load him not heavily. Here, Pedro! help.
Go with them to the Plaça, take the hoops.
The sights will pay thee.

BLASCO.

I 'll be there anon,
And set the fashion with a good white coin.
But let us see as well as hear.

HOST.

Ay, prithee.
Some tricks, a dance.

BLASCO.

Yes, 't is more rational.

ROLDAN (*turning round with the bundle and monkey on his shoulders*).

You shall see all, sirs. There 's no man in Spain
Knows his art better. I 've a twinging knee
Oft hinders dancing, and the boy is lame.
But no man's monkey has more tricks than mine.

[At this high praise the gloomy Annibal,
Mournful professor of high drollery,
Seemed to look gloomier, and the little troop
Went slowly out, escorted from the door
By all the idlers. From the balcony
Slowly subsided the black radiance
Of agate eyes, and broke in chattering sounds,
Coaxings and trampings, and the small hoarse squeak
Of Pepe's reed. And our group talked again.]

HOST.

I 'll get this juggler, if he quits him well,
An audience here as choice as can be lured.
For me, when a poor devil does his best,
'T is my delight to soothe his soul with praise.
What though the best be bad? remains the good
Of throwing food to a lean hungry dog.

I'd give up the best jugglery in life
To see a miserable juggler pleased.
But that's my humor. Crowds are malcontent,
And cruel as the Holy .... Shall we go?
All of us now together?

LOPEZ.

Well, not I.
I may be there anon, but first I go
To the lower prison. There is strict command
That all our Gypsy prisoners shall to-night
Be lodged within the fort. They've forged enough
Of balls and bullets, — used up all the metal.
At morn to-morrow they must carry stones
Up the south tower. 'T is a fine stalwart band,
Fit for the hardest tasks. Some say, the queen
Would have the Gypsies banished with the Jews.
Some say, 't were better harness them for work.
They'd feed on any filth and save the Spaniard.
Some say — but I must go. 'T will soon be time
To head the escort. We shall meet again.

BLASCO.

Go, sir, with God (*exit Lopez*). A very proper man,
And soldierly. But, for this banishment
Some men are hot on, it ill pleases me.
The Jews, now (sirs, if any Christian here
Had Jews for ancestors, I blame him not;
We cannot all be Goths of Aragon), —
Jews are not fit for heaven, but on earth
They are most useful. 'T is the same with mules,
Horses, or oxen, or with any pig
Except Saint Anthony's. They are useful here
(The Jews, I mean) though they may go to hell.
And, look you, useful sins, — why Providence

Sends Jews to do 'em, saving Christian souls.
The very Gypsies, curbed and harnessed well,
Would make draught cattle, feed on vermin too,
Cost less than grazing brutes, and turn bad food
To handsome carcasses; sweat at the forge
For little wages, and well drilled and flogged
Might work like slaves, some Spaniards looking on.
I deal in plate, and am no priest to say
What God may mean, save when he means plain sense;
But when he sent the Gypsies wandering
In punishment because they sheltered not
Our Lady and Saint Joseph (and no doubt
Stole the small ass they fled with into Egypt),
Why send them here? 'T is plain he saw the use
They 'd be to Spaniards. Shall we banish them,
And tell God we know better? 'T is a sin.
They talk of vermin; but, sirs, vermin large
Were made to eat the small, or else to eat
The noxious rubbish, and picked Gypsy men
Might serve in war to climb, be killed, and fall,
To make an easy ladder. Once I saw
A Gypsy sorcerer, at a spring and grasp,
Kill one who came to seize him: talk of strength!
Nay, swiftness too, for while we crossed ourselves
He vanished like, — say, like . . . .

JUAN.

A swift black snake,
Or like a living arrow fledged with will.

BLASCO.

Why, did you see him, pray?

JUAN.

Not then, but now,
As painters see the many in the one.

We have a Gypsy in Bedmár whose frame
Nature compacted with such fine selection,
'T would yield a dozen types: all Spanish knights,
From him who slew Rolando at the pass
Up to the mighty Cid; all deities,
Thronging Olympus in fine attitudes;
Or all hell's heroes whom the poet saw
Tremble like lions, writhe like demigods.

HOST.

Pause not yet, Juan, — more hyperbole!
Shoot upward still and flare in meteors
Before thou sink to earth in dull brown fact.

BLASCO.

Nay, give me fact, high shooting suits not me.
I never stare to look for soaring larks.
What is this Gypsy?

HOST.

Chieftain of a band,
The Moor's allies, whom full a month ago
Our Duke surprised and brought as captives home.
He needed smiths, and doubtless the brave Moor
Has missed some useful scouts and archers too.
Juan's fantastic pleasure is to watch
These Gypsies forging, and to hold discourse
With this great chief, whom he transforms at will
To sage or warrior, and like the sun
Plays daily at fallacious alchemy,
Turns sand to gold and dewy spider-webs
To myriad rainbows. Still the sand is sand,
And still in sober shade you see the web.
'T is so, I 'll wager, with his Gypsy chief, —
A piece of stalwart cunning, nothing more.

JUAN.

No! My invention had been all too poor
To frame this Zarca as I saw him first.
'T was when they stripped him. In his chieftain's gear,
Amidst his men he seemed a royal barb
Followed by wild-maned Andalusian colts.
He had a necklace of a strange device
In finest gold of unknown workmanship,
But delicate as Moorish, fit to kiss
Fedalma's neck, and play in shadows there.
He wore fine mail, a rich-wrought sword and belt,
And on his surcoat black a broidered torch,
A pine-branch flaming, grasped by two dark hands.
But when they stripped him of his ornaments
It was the bawbles lost their grace, not he.
His eyes, his mouth, his nostril, all inspired
With scorn that mastered utterance of scorn,
With power to check all rage until it turned
To ordered force, unleashed on chosen prey, —
It seemed the soul within him made his limbs
And made them grand. The bawbles were well gone.
He stood the more a king, when bared to man.

BLASCO.

Maybe. But nakedness is bad for trade,
And is not decent. Well-wrought metal, sir,
Is not a bawble. Had you seen the camp,
The royal camp at Velez Malaga,
Ponce de Leon and the other dukes,
The king himself and all his thousand knights
For body-guard, 't would not have left you breath
To praise a Gypsy thus. A man 's a man;
But when you see a king, you see the work
Of many thousand men. King Ferdinand

Bears a fine presence, and hath proper limbs;
But what though he were shrunken as a relic?
You 'd see the gold and gems that cased him o'er,
And all the pages round him in brocade,
And all the lords, themselves a sort of kings,
Doing him reverence. That strikes an awe
Into a common man, — especially
A judge of plate.

HOST.

Faith, very wisely said.
Purge thy speech, Juan. It is over-full
Of this same Gypsy. Praise the Catholic King.
And come now, let us see the juggler's skill.

The Plaça Santiago.

'T is daylight still, but now the golden cross
Uplifted by the angel on the dome
Stands rayless in calm color clear-defined
Against the northern blue; from turrets high
The flitting splendor sinks with folded wing
Dark-hid till morning, and the battlements
Wear soft relenting whiteness mellowed o'er
By summers generous and winters bland.
Now in the east the distance casts its veil,
And gazes with a deepening earnestness.
The old rain-fretted mountains in their robes
Of shadow-broken gray; the rounded hills
Reddened with blood of Titans, whose huge limbs,
Entombed within, feed full the hardy flesh
Of cactus green and blue, broad-sworded aloes;
The cypress soaring black above the lines
Of white court-walls; the jointed sugar-canes

Pale-golden with their feathers motionless
In the warm quiet; — all thought-teaching form
Utters itself in firm unshimmering hues.
For the great rock has screened the westering sun
That still on plains beyond streams vaporous gold
Among the branches; and within Bedmár
Has come the time of sweet serenity
When color glows unglittering, and the soul
Of visible things shows silent happiness,
As that of lovers trusting though apart.
The ripe-cheeked fruits, the crimson-petalled flowers;
The wingéd life that pausing seems a gem
Cunningly carven on the dark green leaf;
The face of man with hues supremely blent
To difference fine as of a voice 'mid sounds: —
Each lovely light-dipped thing seems to emerge
Flushed gravely from baptismal sacrament.
All beauteous existence rests, yet wakes,
Lies still, yet conscious, with clear open eyes
And gentle breath and mild suffuséd joy.
'T is day, but day that falls like melody
Repeated on a string with graver tones, —
Tones such as linger in a long farewell.

The Plaça widens in the passive air, —
The Plaça Santiago, where the church,
A mosque converted, shows an eyeless face
Red-checkered, faded, doing penance still, —
Bearing with Moorish arch the imaged saint,
Apostle, baron, Spanish warrior,
Whose charger's hoofs trample the turbaned dead,
Whose banner with the Cross, the bloody sword,
Flashes athwart the Moslem's glazing eye,
And mocks his trust in Allah who forsakes.
Up to the church the Plaça gently slopes,

In shape most like the pious palmer's shell,
Girdled with low white houses; high above
Tower the strong fortress and sharp-angled wall
And well-flanked castle gate. From o'er the roofs,
And from the shadowed pátios cool, there spreads
The breath of flowers and aromatic leaves
Soothing the sense with bliss indefinite, —
A baseless hope, a glad presentiment,
That curves the lip more softly, fills the eye
With more indulgent beam. And so it soothes,
So gently sways the pulses of the crowd
Who make a zone about the central spot
Chosen by Roldan for his theatre.
Maids with arched eyebrows, delicate-pencilled, dark
Fold their round arms below the kerchief full;
Men shoulder little girls; and grandames gray,
But muscular still, hold babies on their arms;
While mothers keep the stout-legged boys in front
Against their skirts, as old Greek pictures show
The Glorious Mother with the Boy divine.
Youths keep the places for themselves, and roll
Large lazy eyes, and call recumbent dogs
(For reasons deep below the reach of thought).
The old men cough with purpose, wish to hint
Wisdom within that cheapens jugglery,
Maintain a neutral air, and knit their brows
In observation. None are quarrelsome,
Noisy, or very merry; for their blood
Moves slowly into fervor, — they rejoice
Like those dark birds that sweep with heavy wing
Cheering their mates with melancholy cries.

But now the gilded balls begin to play
In rhythmic numbers, ruled by practice fine
Of eye and muscle: all the juggler's form

Consents harmonious in swift-gliding change,
Easily forward stretched or backward bent
With lightest step and movement circular
Round a fixed point: 't is not the old Roldan now,
The dull, hard, weary, miserable man,
The soul all parched to languid appetite
And memory of desire: 't is wondrous force
That moves in combination multiform
Towards conscious ends: 't is Roldan glorious,
Holding all eyes like any meteor,
King of the moment save when Annibal
Divides the scene and plays the comic part,
Gazing with blinking glances up and down,
Dancing and throwing naught and catching it,
With mimicry as merry as the tasks
Of penance-working shades in Tartarus.

Pablo stands passive, and a space apart,
Holding a viol, waiting for command.
Music must not be wasted, but must rise
As needed climax; and the audience
Is growing with late comers. Juan now,
And the familiar Host, with Blasco broad,
Find way made gladly to the inmost round
Studded with heads. Lorenzo knits the crowd
Into one family by showing all
Good-will and recognition. Juan casts
His large and rapid-measuring glance around;
But — with faint quivering, transient as a breath
Shaking a flame — his eyes make sudden pause
Where by the jutting angle of a street
Castle-ward leading, stands a female form,
A kerchief pale square-drooping o'er the brow,
About her shoulders dim brown serge, — in garb
Most like a peasant-woman from the vale,

Who might have lingered after marketing
To see the show. What thrill mysterious,
Ray-borne from orb to orb of conscious eyes,
The swift observing sweep of Juan's glance
Arrests an instant, then with prompting fresh
Diverts it lastingly? He turns at once
To watch the gilded balls, and nod and smile
At little round Pepíta, blondest maid
In all Bedmár, — Pepíta, fair yet flecked,
Saucy of lip and nose, of hair as red
As breasts of robins stepping on the snow, —
Who stands in front with little tapping feet,
And baby-dimpled hands that hide enclosed
Those sleeping crickets, the dark castanets.
But soon the gilded balls have ceased to play,
And Annibal is leaping through the hoops
That turn to twelve, meeting him as he flies
In the swift circle. Shuddering he leaps,
But with each spring flies swift and swifter still
To loud and louder shouts, while the great hoops
Are changed to smaller. Now the crowd is fired.
The motion swift, the living victim urged,
The imminent failure and repeated scape
Hurry all pulses and intoxicate
With subtle wine of passion many-mixt.
'T is all about a monkey leaping hard
Till near to gasping; but it serves as well
As the great circus or arena dire,
Where these are lacking. Roldan cautiously
Slackens the leaps and lays the hoops to rest,
And Annibal retires with reeling brain
And backward stagger, — pity, he could not smile!

Now Roldan spreads his carpet, now he shows
Strange metamorphoses: the pebble black

Changes to whitest egg within his hand;
A staring rabbit, with retreating ears,
Is swallowed by the air and vanishes;
He tells men's thoughts about the shaken dice,
Their secret choosings; makes the white beans pass
With causeless act sublime from cup to cup
Turned empty on the ground, — diablerie
That pales the girls and puzzles all the boys:
These tricks are samples, hinting to the town
Roldan's great mastery. He tumbles next,
And Annibal is called to mock each feat
With arduous comicality and save
By rule romantic the great public mind
(And Roldan's body) from too serious strain.

But with the tumbling, lest the feats should fail,
And so need veiling in a haze of sound,
Pablo awakes the viol and the bow, —
The masculine bow that draws the woman's heart
From out the strings and makes them cry, yearn, plead,
Tremble, exult, with mystic union
Of joy acute and tender suffering.
To play the viol and discreetly mix
Alternate with the bow's keen biting tones
The throb responsive to the finger's touch,
Was rarest skill that Pablo half had caught
From an old blind and wandering Catalan;
The other half was rather heritage
From treasure stored by generations past
In winding chambers of receptive sense.

The wingéd sounds exalt the thick-pressed crowd
With a new pulse in common, blending all
The gazing life into one larger soul
With dimly widened consciousness: as waves

In heightened movement tell of waves far off.
And the light changes; westward stationed clouds,
The sun's ranged outposts, luminous message spread,
Rousing quiescent things to doff their shade
And show themselves as added audience.
Now Pablo, letting fall the eager bow,
Solicits softer murmurs from the strings,
And now above them pours a wondrous voice
(Such as Greek reapers heard in Sicily)
With wounding rapture in it, like love's arrows;
And clear upon clear air as colored gems
Dropped in a crystal cup of water pure,
Fall words of sadness, simple, lyrical:

Spring comes hither,
Buds the rose;
Roses wither,
Sweet spring goes.
Ojalá, would she carry ***me!***

Summer soars,—
Wide-winged day
White light pours,
Flies away.
Ojalá, would he carry me!

Soft winds blow,
Westward born,
Onward go
Toward the morn.
Ojalá, would they carry ***me!***

Sweet birds sing
O'er the graves,
Then take wing
O'er the waves.
Ojalá, would they carry ***me!***

When the voice paused and left the viol's note
To plead forsaken, 't was as when a cloud,
Hiding the sun, makes all the leaves and flowers
Shiver. But when with measured change the strings
Had taught regret new longing, clear again,
Welcome as hope recovered, flowed the voice.

Warm whispering through the slender olive leaves
Came to me a gentle sound,
Whispering of a secret found
In the clear sunshine 'mid the golden sheaves:
Said it was sleeping for me in the morn,
Called it gladness, called it joy,
Drew me on — "Come hither, boy" —
To where the blue wings rested on the corn.
I thought the gentle sound had whispered true, —
Thought the little heaven mine,
Leaned to clutch the thing divine,
And saw the blue wings melt within the blue.

The long notes linger on the trembling air,
With subtle penetration enter all
The myriad corridors of the passionate soul,
Message-like spread, and answering action rouse.
Not angular jigs that warm the chilly limbs
In hoary northern mists, but action curved
To soft andante strains pitched plaintively.
Vibrations sympathetic stir all limbs:
Old men live backward in their dancing prime,
And move in memory; small legs and arms
With pleasant agitation purposeless
Go up and down like pretty fruits in gales.
All long in common for the expressive act
Yet wait for it; as in the olden time
Men waited for the bard to tell their thought.



"A figure lithe, all white and saffron robed,
Flashed right across the circle."

"The dance! the dance!" is shouted all around.
Now Pablo lifts the bow, Pepíta now,
Ready as bird that sees the sprinkled corn,
When Juan nods and smiles, puts forth her foot
And lifts her arm to wake the castanets.
Juan advances, too, from out the ring
And bends to quit his lute; for now the scene
Is empty; Roldan, weary, gathers pence,
Followed by Annibal with purse and stick.
The carpet lies a colored isle untrod,
Inviting feet: "The dance, the dance," resounds,
The bow entreats with slow melodic strain,
And all the air with expectation yearns.

Sudden, with gliding motion like a flame
That through dim vapor makes a path of glory,
A figure lithe, all white and saffron-robed,
Flashed right across the circle, and now stood
With ripened arms uplift and regal head,
Like some tall flower whose dark and intense heart
Lies half within a tulip-tinted cup.

Juan stood fixed and pale; Pepíta stepped
Backward within the ring: the voices fell
From shouts insistent to more passive tones
Half meaning welcome, half astonishment.
"Lady Fedalma!—will she dance for us?"

But she, sole swayed by impulse passionate,
Feeling all life was music and all eyes
The warming, quickening light that music makes,
Moved as, in dance religious, Miriam,
When on the Red Sea shore she raised her voice,
And led the chorus of her people's joy;
Or as the Trojan maids that reverent sang

Watching the sorrow-crownéd Hecuba:
Moved in slow curves voluminous, gradual,
Feeling and action flowing into one,
In Eden's natural taintless marriage-bond;
Ardently modest, sensuously pure,
With young delight that wonders at itself
And throbs as innocent as opening flowers,
Knowing not comment, — soilless, beautiful.
The spirit in her gravely glowing face
With sweet community informs her limbs,
Filling their fine gradation with the breath
Of virgin majesty; as full vowelled words
Are new impregnate with the master's thought.
Even the chance-strayed delicate tendrils black,
That backward 'scape from out her wreathing hair, —
Even the pliant folds that cling transverse
When with obliquely soaring bend altern
She seems a goddess quitting earth again —
Gather expression — a soft undertone
And resonance exquisite from the grand chord
Of her harmoniously bodied soul.

At first a reverential silence guards
The eager senses of the gazing crowd:
They hold their breath, and live by seeing her.
But soon the admiring tension finds relief, —
Sighs of delight, applausive murmurs low,
And stirrings gentle as of earéd corn
Or seed-bent grasses, when the ocean's breath
Spreads landward. Even Juan is impelled
By the swift-travelling movement: fear and doubt
Give way before the hurrying energy;
He takes his lute and strikes in fellowship,
Filling more full the rill of melody
Raised ever and anon to clearest flood

By Pablo's voice, that dies away too soon,
Like the sweet blackbird's fragmentary chant,
Yet wakes again, with varying rise and fall,
In songs that seem emergent memories
Prompting brief utterance, — little cancións
And villancicos, Andalusia-born.

PABLO (*sings*).

It was in the prime
Of the sweet Spring-time.
In the linnet's throat
Trembled the love-note,
And the love-stirred air
Thrilled the blossoms there.
Little shadows danced
Each a tiny elf,
Happy in large light
And the thinnest self.

It was but a minute
In a far-off Spring,
But each gentle thing,
Sweetly-wooing linnet,
Soft-thrilled hawthorn-tree,
Happy shadowy elf
With the thinnest self,
Live still on in me.
Oh, the sweet, sweet prime
Of the past Spring-time!

And still the light is changing: high above
Float soft pink clouds; others with deeper flush
Stretch like flamingoes bending toward the south.
Comes a more solemn brilliance o'er the sky,
A meaning more intense upon the air, —

The inspiration of the dying day.
And Juan now, when Pablo's notes subside,
Soothes the regretful ear, and breaks the pause
With masculine voice in deep antiphony.

JUAN (*sings*).

Day is dying! Float, O song,
Down the westward river,
Requiem chanting to the Day,—
Day, the mighty Giver.

Pierced by shafts of Time he bleeds
Melted rubies sending
Through the river and the sky,
Earth and heaven blending;

All the long-drawn earthy banks
Up to cloud-land lifting:
Slow between them drifts the swan,
'Twixt two heavens drifting.

Wings half open, like a flow'r
Inly deeper flushing,
Neck and breast as virgin's pure,—
Virgin proudly blushing.

Day is dying! Float, O swan,
Down the ruby river;
Follow, song, in requiem
To the mighty Giver.

The exquisite hour, the ardor of the crowd,
The strains more plenteous, and the gathering might
Of action passionate where no effort is,

But self's poor gates open to rushing power
That blends the inward ebb and outward vast, —
All gathering influences culminate
And urge Fedalma. Earth and heaven seem one,
Life a glad trembling on the outer edge
Of unknown rapture. Swifter now she moves,
Filling the measure with a double beat
And widening circle; now she seems to glow
With more declaréd presence, glorified.
Circling, she lightly bends and lifts on high
The multitudinous-sounding tambourine,
And makes it ring and boom, then lifts it higher
Stretching her left arm beauteous; now the crowd
Exultant shouts, forgetting poverty
In the rich moment of possessing her.

But sudden, at one point, the exultant throng
Is pushed and hustled, and then thrust apart:
Something approaches, — something cuts the ring
Of jubilant idlers, — startling as a streak
From alien wounds across the blooming flesh
Of careless sporting childhood. 'T is the band
Of Gypsy prisoners. Soldiers lead the van
And make sparse flanking guard, aloof surveyed
By gallant Lopez, stringent in command.
The Gypsies chained in couples, all save one,
Walk in dark file with grand bare legs and arms
And savage melancholy in their eyes
That star-like gleam from out black clouds of hair;
Now they are full in sight, and now they stretch
Right to the centre of the open space.
Fedalma now, with gentle wheeling sweep
Returning, like the loveliest of the Hours
Strayed from her sisters, truant lingering,
Faces again the centre, swings again

The uplifted tambourine. . . . .
When lo! with sound
Stupendous throbbing, solemn as a voice
Sent by the invisible choir of all the dead,
Tolls the great passing bell that calls to prayer
For souls departed: at the mighty beat
It seems the light sinks awe-struck, — 't is the note
Of the sun's burial; speech and action pause;
Religious silence and the holy sign
Of everlasting memories (the sign
Of death that turned to more diffusive life)
Pass o'er the Plaça. Little children gaze
With lips apart, and feel the unknown god;
And the most men and women pray. Not all.
The soldiers pray; the Gypsies stand unmoved
As pagan statues with proud level gaze.
But he who wears a solitary chain
Heading the file, has turned to face Fedalma.
She motionless, with arm uplifted, guards
The tambourine aloft (lest, sudden-lowered,
Its trivial jingle mar the duteous pause),
Reveres the general prayer, but prays not, stands
With level glance meeting that Gypsy's eyes,
That seem to her the sadness of the world
Rebuking her, the great bell's hidden thought
Now first unveiled, — the sorrows unredeemed
Of races outcast, scorned, and wandering.
Why does he look at her? why she at him?
As if the meeting light between their eyes
Made permanent union? His deep-knit brow,
Inflated nostril, scornful lip compressed,
Seem a dark hieroglyph of coming fate
Written before her. Father Isidor
Had terrible eyes, and was her enemy;
She knew it and defied him; all her soul

Rounded and hardened in its separateness
When they encountered. But this prisoner, —
This Gypsy, passing, gazing casually, —
Was he her enemy too? She stood all quelled,
The impetuous joy that hurried in her veins
Seemed backward rushing turned to chillest awe,
Uneasy wonder, and a vague self-doubt.
The minute brief stretched measureless, dream-filled
By a dilated new-fraught consciousness.

Now it was gone; the pious murmur ceased,
The Gypsies all moved onward at command
And careless noises blent confusedly.
But the ring closed again, and many ears
Waited for Pablo's music, many eyes
Turned towards the carpet: it lay bare and dim,
Twilight was there, — the bright Fedalma gone.

A handsome room in the Castle. On a table a rich jewel-casket.

Silva had dropped his mail and with it all
The heavier harness of his warlike cares.
He had not seen Fedalma; miser-like
He hoarded through the hour a costlier joy
By longing oft-repressed. Now it was earned;
And with observance wonted he would send
To ask admission. Spanish gentlemen
Who wooed fair dames of noble ancestry
Did homage with rich tunics and slashed sleeves
And outward-surging linen's costly snow;
With broidered scarf transverse, and rosary
Handsomely wrought to fit high-blooded prayer;
So hinting in how deep respect they held

That self they threw before their lady's feet.
And Silva — that Fedalma's rate should stand
No jot below the highest, that her love
Might seem to all the royal gift it was —
Turned every trifle in his mien and garb
To scrupulous language, uttering to the world
That since she loved him he went carefully,
Bearing a thing so precious in his hand.
A man of high-wrought strain, fastidious
In his acceptance, dreading all delight
That speedy dies and turns to carrion:
His senses much exacting, deep instilled
With keen imagination's difficult needs; —
Like strong-limbed monsters studded o'er with eyes,
Their hunger checked by overwhelming vision,
Or that fierce lion in symbolic dream
Snatched from the ground by wings and new-endowed
With a man's thought-propelled relenting heart.
Silva was both the lion and the man;
First hesitating shrank, then fiercely sprang,
Or having sprung, turned pallid at his deed
And loosed the prize, paying his blood for naught.
A nature half-transformed, with qualities
That oft bewrayed each other, elements
Not blent but struggling, breeding strange effects,
Passing the reckoning of his friends or foes.
Haughty and generous, grave and passionate;
With tidal moments of devoutest awe,
Sinking anon to furthest ebb of doubt;
Deliberating ever, till the sting
Of a recurrent ardor made him rush
Right against reasons that himself had drilled
And marshalled painfully. A spirit framed
Too proudly special for obedience,
Too subtly pondering for mastery:

Born of a goddess with a mortal sire,
Heir of flesh-fettered, weak divinity,
Doom-gifted with long resonant consciousness
And perilous heightening of the sentient soul.
But look less curiously: life itself
May not express us all, may leave the worst
And the best too, like tunes in mechanism
Never awaked. In various catalogues
Objects stand variously. Silva stands
As a young Spaniard, handsome, noble, brave,
With titles many, high in pedigree;
Or, as a nature quiveringly poised
In reach of storms, whose qualities may turn
To murdered virtues that still walk as ghosts
Within the shuddering soul and shriek remorse;
Or, as a lover .... In the screening time
Of purple blossoms, when the petals crowd
And softly crush like cherub cheeks in heaven,
Who thinks of greenly withered fruit and worms?
Oh the warm southern spring is beauteous!
And in love's spring all good seems possible:
No threats, all promise, brooklets ripple full
And bathe the rushes, vicious crawling things
Are pretty eggs, the sun shines graciously
And parches not, the silent rain beats warm
As childhood's kisses, days are young and grow,
And earth seems in its sweet beginning time
Fresh made for two who live in Paradise.
Silva is in love's spring, its freshness breathed
Within his soul along the dusty ways
While marching homeward; 't is around him now
As in a garden fenced in for delight, —
And he may seek delight. Smiling he lifts
A whistle from his belt, but lets it fall
Ere it has reached his lips, jarred by the sound

Of ushers' knocking, and a voice that craves
Admission for the Prior of San Domingo.

PRIOR (*entering*).

You look perturbed, my son. I thrust myself
Between you and some beckoning intent
That wears a face more smiling than my own.

DON SILVA.

Father, enough that you are here. I wait,
As always, your commands, — nay, should have sought
An early audience.

PRIOR.

To give, I trust,
Good reasons for your change of policy?

DON SILVA.

Strong reasons, father.

PRIOR.

Ay, but are they good?
I have known reasons strong, but strongly evil.

DON SILVA.

'T is possible. I but deliver mine
To your strict judgment. Late despatches sent
With urgence by the Count of Bavien,
No hint on my part prompting, with besides
The testified concurrence of the king
And our Grand Master, have made peremptory
The course which else had been but rational.
Without the forces furnished by allies
The siege of Guadix would be madness. More,

El Zagal has his eyes upon Bedmár:
Let him attempt it: in three weeks from hence
The Master and the Lord of Aguilar
Will bring their forces. We shall catch the Moors,
The last gleaned clusters of their bravest men,
As in a trap. You have my reasons, father.

PRIOR.

And they sound well. But free-tongued rumor adds
A pregnant supplement, — in substance this:
That inclination snatches arguments
To make indulgence seem judicious choice;
That you, commanding in God's Holy War,
Lift prayers to Satan to retard the fight
And give you time for feasting, — wait a siege,
Call daring enterprise impossible,
Because you 'd marry! You, a Spanish duke,
Christ's general, would marry like a clown,
Who, selling fodder dearer for the war,
Is all the merrier; nay, like the brutes,
Who know no awe to check their appetite,
Coupling 'mid heaps of slain, while still in front
The battle rages.

DON SILVA.

Rumor on your lips
Is eloquent, father.

PRIOR.

Is she true?

DON SILVA.

Perhaps.
I seek to justify my public acts
And not my private joy. Before the world
Enough if I am faithful in command,

Betray not by my deeds, swerve from no task
My knightly vows constrain me to: herein
I ask all men to test me.

PRIOR.

Knightly vows?
Is it by their constraint that you must marry?

DON SILVA.

Marriage is not a breach of them. I use
A sanctioned liberty . . . . your pardon, father,
I need not teach you what the Church decrees.
But facts may weaken texts, and so dry up
The fount of eloquence. The Church relaxed
Our Order's rule before I took the vows.

PRIOR.

Ignoble liberty! you snatch your rule
From what God tolerates, not what he loves? —
Inquire what lowest offering may suffice,
Cheapen it meanly to an obolus,
Buy, and then count the coin left in your purse
For your debauch? — Measure obedience
By scantest powers of feeble brethren
Whom Holy Church indulges? — Ask great Law,
The rightful Sovereign of the human soul,
For what it pardons, not what it commands?
Oh fallen knighthood, penitent of high vows,
Asking a charter to degrade itself!
Such poor apology of rules relaxed
Blunts not suspicion of that doubleness
Your enemies tax you with.

DON SILVA.

Oh, for the rest,
Conscience is harder than our enemies,

Knows more, accuses with more nicety,
Nor needs to question Rumor if we fall
Below the perfect model of our thought.
I fear no outward arbiter. — You smile?

PRIOR.

Ay, at the contrast 'twixt your portraiture
And the true image of your conscience, shown
As now I see it in your acts. I see
A drunken sentinel who gives alarm
At his own shadow, but when scalers snatch
His weapon from his hand smiles idiot-like
At games he 's dreaming of.

DON SILVA.

A parable!
The husk is rough, — holds something bitter, doubtless.

PRIOR.

Oh, the husk gapes with meaning over-ripe.
You boast a conscience that controls your deeds,
Watches your knightly armor, guards your rank
From stain of treachery, — you, helpless slave,
Whose will lies nerveless in the clutch of lust, —
Of blind mad passion, — passion itself most helpless,
Storm-driven, like the monsters of the sea.
O famous conscience!

DON SILVA.

Pause there! Leave unsaid
Aught that will match that text. More were too much,
Even from holy lips. I own no love
But such as guards my honor, since it guards
Hers whom I love! I suffer no foul words
To stain the gift I lay before her feet;
And, being hers, my honor is more safe.

PRIOR.

Verse-makers' talk! fit for a world of rhymes,
Where facts are feigned to tickle idle ears,
Where good and evil play at tournament
And end in amity, — a world of lies, —
A carnival of words where every year
Stale falsehoods serve fresh men. Your honor safe?
What honor has a man with double bonds?
Honor is shifting as the shadows are
To souls that turn their passions into laws.
A Christian knight who weds an infidel ....

DON SILVA (*fiercely*).

An infidel!

PRIOR.

May one day spurn the Cross,
And call that honor! — one day find his sword
Stained with his brother's blood, and call that honor!
Apostates' honor? — harlots' chastity!
Renegades' faithfulness? — Iscariot's!

DON SILVA.

Strong words and burning; but they scorch not me.
Fedalma is a daughter of the Church, —
Has been baptized and nurtured in the faith.

PRIOR.

Ay, as a thousand Jewesses, who yet
Are brides of Satan in a robe of flames.

DON SILVA.

Fedalma is no Jewess, bears no marks
That tell of Hebrew blood.

PRIOR.

She bears the marks
Of races unbaptized, that never bowed
Before the holy signs, were never moved
By stirrings of the sacramental gifts.

DON SILVA (*scornfully*).

Holy accusers practise palmistry,
And, other witness lacking, read the skin.

PRIOR.

I read a record deeper than the skin.
What! Shall the trick of nostrils and of lips
Descend through generations, and the soul
That moves within our frame like God in worlds —
Convulsing, urging, melting, withering —
Imprint no record, leave no documents,
Of her great history? Shall men bequeath
The fancies of their palate to their sons,
And shall the shudder of restraining awe,
The slow-wept tears of contrite memory,
Faith's prayerful labor, and the food divine
Of fasts ecstatic, — shall these pass away
Like wind upon the waters, tracklessly?
Shall the mere curl of eyelashes remain
And god-enshrining symbols leave no trace
Of tremors reverent? — That maiden's blood
Is as unchristian as the leopard's.

DON SILVA.

Say,
Unchristian as the Blessed Virgin's blood
Before the angel spoke the word, "All hail!"

PRIOR (*smiling bitterly*).

Say I not truly? See, your passion weaves
Already blasphemies!

DON SILVA.

'T is you provoke them.

PRIOR.

I strive, as still the Holy Spirit strives,
To move the will perverse. But, failing this,
God commands other means to save our blood,
To save Castilian glory, — nay, to save
The name of Christ from blot of traitorous deeds.

DON SILVA.

Of traitorous deeds! Age, kindred, and your cowl,
Give an ignoble license to your tongue.
As for your threats, fulfil them at your peril.
'T is you, not I, will gibbet our great name
To rot in infamy. If I am strong
In patience now, trust me, I can be strong
Then in defiance.

PRIOR.

Miserable man!
Your strength will turn to anguish, like the strength
Of fallen angels. Can you change your blood?
You are a Christian, with the Christian awe
In every vein. A Spanish noble, born
To serve your people and your people's faith.
Strong, are you? Turn your back upon the Cross, —
Its shadow is before you. Leave your place:
Quit the great ranks of knighthood: you will walk
Forever with a tortured double self,
A self that will be hungry while you feast,
Will blush with shame while you are glorified,
Will feel the ache and chill of desolation,
Even in the very bosom of your love.
Mate yourself with this woman, fit for what?

To make the sport of Moorish palaces,
A lewd Herodias . . . .

DON SILVA.

Stop! no other man,
Priest though he were, had had his throat left free
For passage of those words. I would have clutched
His serpent's neck, and flung him out to hell!
A monk must needs defile the name of love:
He knows it but as tempting devils paint it.
You think to scare my love from its resolve
With arbitrary consequences, strained
By rancorous effort from the thinnest motes
Of possibility? — cite hideous lists
Of sins irrelevant, to frighten me
With bugbears' names, as women fright a child?
Poor pallid wisdom, taught by inference
From blood-drained life, where phantom terrors rule,
And all achievement is to leave undone!
Paint the day dark, make sunshine cold to me,
Abolish the earth's fairness, prove it all
A fiction of my eyes, — then, after that,
Profane Fedalma.

PRIOR.

Oh, there is no need:
She has profaned herself. Go, raving man,
And see her dancing now. Go, see your bride
Flaunting her beauties grossly in the gaze
Of vulgar idlers, — eking out the show
Made in the Plaça by a mountebank.
I hinder you no further.

DON SILVA.

It is false!

PRIOR.

Go, prove it false, then.

[Father Isidor
Drew on his cowl and turned away. The face
That flashed anathemas, in swift eclipse
Seemed Silva's vanished confidence. In haste
He rushed unsignalled through the corridor
To where the Duchess once, Fedalma now,
Had residence retired from din of arms, —
Knocked, opened, found all empty, — said
With muffled voice, "Fedalma!" — called more loud,
More oft on Iñez, the old trusted nurse, —
Then searched the terrace-garden, calling still,
But heard no answering sound, and saw no face
Save painted faces staring all unmoved
By agitated tones. He hurried back,
Giving half-conscious orders as he went
To page and usher, that they straight should seek
Lady Fedalma; then with stinging shame
Wished himself silent; reached again the room
Where still the Father's menace seemed to hang
Thickening the air; snatched cloak and pluméd hat,
And grasped, not knowing why, his poniard's hilt;
Then checked himself and said: —]

If he spoke truth!
To know were wound enough, — to see the truth
Were fire upon the wound. It must be false!
His hatred saw amiss, or snatched mistake
In other men's report. I am a fool!
But where can she be gone? gone secretly?
And in my absence? Oh, she meant no wrong!
I am a fool! — But where can she be gone?
With only Iñez? Oh, she meant no wrong!



"Fedalma entered, cast away the cloud
Of serge and linen, and, outbeaming bright,
Advanced a pace towards Silva."

I swear she never meant it. There 's no wrong
But she would make it momentary right
By innocence in doing it. . . . .
And yet,
What is our certainty ? Why, knowing all
That is not secret. Mighty confidence !
One pulse of Time makes the base hollow, — sends
The towering certainty we built so high
Toppling in fragments meaningless. What is —
What will be — must be — pooh ! they wait the key
Of that which is not yet; all other keys
Are made of our conjectures, take their sense
From humors fooled by hope, or by despair.
Know what is good ? Oh God, we know not yet
If bliss itself is not young misery
With fangs swift growing. . . . .
But some outward harm
May even now be hurting, grieving her.
Oh, I must search, — face shame, — if shame be there.
Here, Perez ! hasten to Don Alvar, — tell him
Lady Fedalma must be sought, — is lost, —
Has met, I fear, some mischance. He must send
Towards divers points. I go myself to seek
First in the town. . . . .

[As Perez oped the door,
Then moved aside for passage of the Duke,
Fedalma entered, cast away the cloud
Of serge and linen, and, outbeaming bright,
Advanced a pace towards Silva, — but then paused,
For he had started and retreated; she,
Quick and responsive as the subtle air
To change in him, divined that she must wait
Until they were alone: they stood and looked.
Within the Duke was struggling confluence

Of feelings manifold, — pride, anger, dread,
Meeting in stormy rush with sense secure
That she was present, with the satisfied thirst
Of gazing love, with trust inevitable
As in beneficent virtues of the light
And all earth's sweetness, that Fedalma's soul
Was free from blemishing purpose. Yet proud wrath
Leaped in dark flood above the purer stream
That strove to drown it: Anger seeks its prey, —
Something to tear with sharp-edged tooth and claw,
Likes not to go off hungry, leaving Love
To feast on milk and honeycomb at will.
Silva's heart said, he must be happy soon,
She being there; but to be happy, — first
He must be angry, having cause. Yet love
Shot like a stifled cry of tenderness
All through the harshness he would fain have given
To the dear word,]

DON SILVA.

Fedalma!

FEDALMA.

O my Lord!
You are come back, and I was wandering!

DON SILVA (*coldly, but with suppressed agitation*).
You meant I should be ignorant.

FEDALMA.

Oh no,
I should have told you after, — not before,
Lest you should hinder me.

DON SILVA.

Then my known wish
Can make no hindrance?

FEDALMA (*archly*).

That depends
On what the wish may be. You wished me once
Not to uncage the birds. I meant to obey:
But in a moment something — something stronger,
Forced me to let them out. It did no harm.
They all came back again, — the silly birds!
I told you, after.

DON SILVA (*with haughty coldness*).

Will you tell me now
What was the prompting stronger than my wish
That made you wander?

FEDALMA (*advancing a step towards him, with a sudden look of anxiety*).

Are you angry?

DON SILVA (*smiling bitterly*).

Angry?
A man deep-wounded may feel too much pain
To feel much anger.

FEDALMA (*still more anxiously*).

You — deep-wounded?

DON SILVA.

Yes!
Have I not made your place and dignity
The very heart of my ambition? You, —
No enemy could do it, — you alone
Can strike it mortally.

FEDALMA.

Nay, Silva, nay.
Has some one told you false? I only went
To see the world with Iñez, — see the town,

The people, everything. It was no harm.
I did not mean to dance: it happened so
At last . . . .

DON SILVA.

O God, it 's true, then! — true that you,
A maiden nurtured as rare flowers are,
The very air of heaven sifted fine
Lest any mote should mar your purity,
Have flung yourself out on the dusty way
For common eyes to see your beauty soiled!
You own it true, — you danced upon the Plaça?

FEDALMA (*proudly*).

Yes, it is true. I was not wrong to dance.
The air was filled with music, with a song
That seemed the voice of the sweet eventide, —
The glowing light entering through eye and ear, —
That seemed our love, — mine, yours, — they are but one, —
Trembling through all my limbs, as fervent words
Tremble within my soul and must be spoken.
And all the people felt a common joy
And shouted for the dance. A brightness soft
As of the angels moving down to see
Illumined the broad space. The joy, the life
Around, within me, were one heaven: I longed
To blend them visibly: I longed to dance
Before the people, — be as mounting flame
To all that burned within them! Nay, I danced;
There was no longing: I but did the deed
Being moved to do it.

(*As* FEDALMA *speaks, she and* DON SILVA *are gradually drawn nearer to each other.*)

Oh, I seemed new-waked
To life in unison with a multitude, —

Feeling my soul upborne by all their souls,
Floating within their gladness! Soon I lost
All sense of separateness: Fedalma died
As a star dies, and melts into the light.
I was not, but joy was, and love and triumph.
Nay, my dear lord, I never could do aught
But I must feel you present. And once done,
Why, you must love it better than your wish.
I pray you, say so, — say, it was not wrong!

(*While* Fedalma *has been making this last appeal, they have gradually come close together, and at last embrace.*)

Don Silva (*holding her hands*).

Dangerous rebel! if the world without
Were pure as that within . . . . but 't is a book
Wherein you only read the poesy
And miss all wicked meanings. Hence the need
For trust — obedience, — call it what you will, —
Towards him whose life will be your guard, — towards me
Who now am soon to be your husband.

Fedalma.

Yes!
That very thing that when I am your wife
I shall be something different, — shall be
I know not what, a duchess with new thoughts, —
For nobles never think like common men,
Nor wives like maidens (oh, you wot not yet
How much I note, with all my ignorance), —
That very thing has made me more resolve
To have my will before I am your wife.
How can the Duchess ever satisfy
Fedalma's unwed eyes? and so to-day
I scolded Iñez till she cried and went.

DON SILVA.

It was a guilty weakness: she knows well
That since you pleaded to be left more free
From tedious tendance and control of dames
Whose rank matched better with your destiny,
Her charge — my trust — was weightier.

FEDALMA.

Nay, my lord
You must not blame her, dear old nurse. She cried.
Why, you would have consented too, at last.
I said such things! I was resolved to go,
And see the streets, the shops, the men at work,
The women, little children, — everything,
Just as it is when nobody looks on.
And I have done it! We were out four hours.
I feel so wise.

DON SILVA.

Had you but seen the town,
You innocent naughtiness, not shown yourself, —
Shown yourself dancing, — you bewilder me! —
Frustrate my judgment with strange negatives
That seem like poverty, and yet are wealth
In precious womanliness, beyond the dower
Of other women: wealth in virgin gold,
Outweighing all their petty currency.
You daring modesty! You shrink no more
From gazing men than from the gazing flowers
That, dreaming sunshine, open as you pass.

FEDALMA.

No, I should like the world to look at me
With eyes of love that make a second day.

I think your eyes would keep the life in me
Though I had naught to feed on else. Their blue
Is better than the heavens', — hold more love
For me, Fedalma, — is a little heaven
For this one little world that looks up now.

DON SILVA.

O precious little world! you make the heaven
As the earth makes the sky. But, dear, all eyes,
Though looking even on you, have not a glance
That cherishes . . . .

FEDALMA.

Ah no, I meant to tell you, —
Tell how my dancing ended with a pang.
There came a man, one among many more,
But *he* came first, with iron on his limbs.
And when the bell tolled, and the people prayed,
And I stood pausing, — then he looked at me.
O Silva, such a man! I thought he rose
From the dark place of long-imprisoned souls,
To say that Christ had never come to them.
It was a look to shame a seraph's joy
And make him sad in heaven. It found me there, —
Seemed to have travelled far to find me there
And grasp me, — claim this festal life of mine
As heritage of sorrow, chill my blood
With the cold iron of some unknown bonds.
The gladness hurrying full within my veins
Was sudden frozen, and I danced no more.
But seeing you let loose the stream of joy,
Mingling the present with the sweetest past.
Yet, Silva, still I see him. Who is he?
Who are those prisoners with him? Are they Moors?

DON SILVA.

No, they are Gypsies, strong and cunning knaves,
A double gain to us by the Moors' loss:
The man you mean — their chief — is an ally
The infidel will miss. His look might chase
A herd of monks, and make them fly more swift
Than from St. Jerome's lion. Such vague fear,
Such bird-like tremors when that savage glance
Turned full upon you in your height of joy
Was natural, was not worth emphasis.
Forget it, dear. This hour is worth whole days
When we are sundered. Danger urges us
To quick resolve.

FEDALMA.

What danger? What resolve?
I never felt chill shadow in my heart
Until this sunset.

DON SILVA.

A dark enmity
Plots how to sever us. And our defence
Is speedy marriage, secretly achieved,
Then publicly declared. Beseech you, dear,
Grant me this confidence; do my will in this,
Trusting the reasons why I overset
All my own airy building raised so high
Of bridal honors, marking when you step
From off your maiden throne to come to me
And bear the yoke of love. There is great need.
I hastened home, carrying this prayer to you
Within my heart. The bishop is my friend,
Furthers our marriage, holds in enmity —
Some whom we love not and who love not us.
By this night's moon our priest will be despatched

From Jaën. I shall march an escort strong
To meet him. Ere a second sun from this
Has risen — you consenting — we may wed.

FEDALMA.

None knowing that we wed?

DON SILVA.

Beforehand none
Save Iñez and Don Alvar. But the vows
Once safely binding us, my household all
Shall know you as their Duchess. No man then
Can aim a blow at you but through my breast,
And what stains you must stain our ancient name
If any hate you I will take his hate
And wear it as a glove upon my helm;
Nay, God himself will never have the power
To strike you solely and leave me unhurt,
He having made us one. Now put the seal
Of your dear lips on that.

FEDALMA.

A solemn kiss? —
Such as I gave you when you came that day
From Córdova, when first we said we loved?
When you had left the ladies of the court
For thirst to see me; and you told me so;
And then I seemed to know why I had lived.
I never knew before. A kiss like that?

DON SILVA.

Yes, yes, you face divine! When was our kiss
Like any other?

FEDALMA.

Nay, I cannot tell
What other kisses are. But that one kiss

Remains upon my lips. The angels, spirits,
Creatures with finer sense, may see it there.
And now another kiss that will not die,
Saying, To-morrow I shall be your wife!

(*They kiss, and pause a moment, looking earnestly in each other's eyes. Then* FEDALMA, *breaking away from* DON SILVA, *stands at a little distance from him with a look of roguish delight.*)

Now I am glad I saw the town to-day
Before I am a Duchess, — glad I gave
This poor Fedalma all her wish. For once,
Long years ago, I cried when Iñez said,
"You are no more a little girl;" I grieved
To part forever from that little girl
And all her happy world so near the ground.
It must be sad to outlive aught we love.
So I shall grieve a little for these days
Of poor unwed Fedalma. Oh, they are sweet,
And none will come just like them. Perhaps the wind
Wails so in winter for the summers dead,
And all sad sounds are nature's funeral cries
For what has been and is not. Are they, Silva?

(*She comes nearer to him again, and lays her hand on his arm, looking up at him with melancholy.*)

DON SILVA.

Why, dearest, you began in merriment,
And end as sadly as a widowed bird.
Some touch mysterious has new-tuned your soul
To melancholy sequence. You soared high
In that wild flight of rapture when you danced,
And now you droop. 'T is arbitrary grief,

Surfeit of happiness, that mourns for loss
Of unwed love, which does but die like seed
For fuller harvest of our tenderness.
We in our wedded life shall know no loss.
We shall new-date our years. What went before
Will be the time of promise, shadows, dreams;
But this, full revelation of great love.
For rivers blent take in a broader heaven,
And we shall blend our souls. Away with grief!
When this dear head shall wear the double crown
Of wife and Duchess, — spiritually crowned
With sworn espousal before God and man, —
Visibly crowned with jewels that bespeak
The chosen sharer of my heritage, —
My love will gather perfectness, as thoughts
That nourish us to magnanimity
Grow perfect with more perfect utterance,
Gathering full-shapen strength. And then these gems,

(Don Silva *draws* Fedalma *towards the jewel casket on the table, and opens it.*)

Helping the utterance of my soul's full choice,
Will be the words made richer by just use,
And have new meaning in their lustrousness.
You know these jewels; they are precious signs
Of long-transmitted honor, heightened still
By worthy wearing; and I give them you, —
Ask you to take them, — place our house's trust
In her sure keeping whom my heart has found
Worthiest, most beauteous. These rubies — see —
Were falsely placed if not upon your brow.

(Fedalma, *while* Don Silva *holds open the casket, bends over it, looking at the jewels with delight.*)

FEDALMA.

Ah, I remember them. In childish days
I felt as if they were alive and breathed.
I used to sit with awe and look at them.
And now they will be mine! I 'll put them on.
Help me, my lord, and you shall see me now
Somewhat as I shall look at Court with you,
That we may know if I shall bear them well.
I have a fear sometimes: I think your love
Has never paused within your eyes to look,
And only passes through them into mine.
But when the Court is looking, and the queen,
Your eyes will follow theirs. Oh, if you saw
That I was other than you wished, — 't were death!

DON SILVA (*taking up a jewel and placing it against her ear*).

Nay, let us try. Take out your ear-ring, sweet.
This ruby glows with longing for your ear.

FEDALMA (*taking out her ear-rings, and then lifting up the other jewels, one by one*).

Pray, fasten in the rubies.
(DON SILVA *begins to put in the ear-ring.*)
I was right!
These gems have life in them: their colors speak,
Say what words fail of. So do many things, —
The scent of jasmine, and the fountain's plash,
The moving shadows on the far-off hills,
The slanting moonlight and our clasping hands.
O Silva, there 's an ocean round our words
That overflows and drowns them. Do you know
Sometimes when we sit silent, and the air
Breathes gently on us from the orange-trees,

It seems that with the whisper of a word
Our souls must shrink, get poorer, more apart.
Is it not true?

DON SILVA.

Yes, dearest, it is true.
Speech is but broken light upon the depth
Of the unspoken: even your loved words
Float in the larger meaning of your voice
As something dimmer.

(*He is still trying in vain to fasten the second ear-ring, while she has stooped again over the casket.*)

FEDALMA (*raising her head*).

Ah! your lordly hands
Will never fix that jewel. Let me try.
Women's small finger-tips have eyes.

DON SILVA.

No, no!
I like the task, only you must be still.

(*She stands perfectly still, clasping her hands together while he fastens the second ear-ring. Suddenly a clanking noise is heard without.*)

FEDALMA (*starting with an expression of pain*).

What is that sound? — that jarring cruel sound?
'T is there, — outside.

(*She tries to start away towards the window, but* DON SILVA *detains her.*)

DON SILVA.

Oh heed it not, it comes
From workmen in the outer gallery.

FEDALMA.

It is the sound of fetters: sound of work
Is not so dismal. Hark, they pass along!
I know it is those Gypsy prisoners.
I saw them, heard their chains. Oh horrible,
To be in chains! Why, I with all my bliss
Have longed sometimes to fly and be at large;
Have felt imprisoned in my luxury
With servants for my jailers. O my lord,
Do you not wish the world were different?

DON SILVA.

It will be different when this war has ceased.
You, wedding me, will make it different,
Making one life more perfect.

FEDALMA.

That is true!
And I shall beg much kindness at your hands
For those who are less happy than ourselves. —
(*Brightening.*) Oh, I shall rule you! ask for many things
Before the world, which you will not deny
For very pride, lest men should say, "The Duke
Holds lightly by his Duchess; he repents
His humble choice."

(*She breaks away from him and returns to the jewels, taking up a necklace, and clasping it on her neck, while he takes a circlet of diamonds and rubies and raises it towards her head as he speaks.*)

DON SILVA.

Doubtless, I shall persist
In loving you, to disappoint the world;

Out of pure obstinacy feel myself
Happiest of men. Now, take the coronet.
(*He places the circlet on her head.*)
The diamonds want more light. See, from this lamp
I can set tapers burning.

FEDALMA.

Tell me, now,
When all these cruel wars are at an end,
And when we go to Court at Córdova,
Or Seville, or Toledo, — wait awhile,
I must be farther off for you to see, —
(*She retreats to a distance from him, and then advances slowly.*)
Now think (I would the tapers gave more light!)
If when you show me at the tournaments
Among the other ladies, they will say,
"Duke Silva is well matched. His bride was naught,
Was some poor foster-child, no man knows what,
Yet is her carriage noble, all her robes
Are worn with grace: she might have been well born."
Will they say so? Think now we are at Court,
And all eyes bent on me.

DON SILVA.

Fear not, my Duchess!
Some knight who loves may say his lady-love
Is fairer, being fairest. None can say
Don Silva's bride might better fit her rank.
You will make rank seem natural as kind,
As eagle's plumage or the lion's might.
A crown upon your brow would seem God-made.

FEDALMA.

Then I am glad! I shall try on to-night
The other jewels, — have the tapers lit,
And see the diamonds sparkle.

(*She goes to the casket again.*)

Here is gold, —
A necklace of pure gold, — most finely wrought.

(*She takes out a large gold necklace and holds it up before her, then turns to* DON SILVA.)

But this is one that you have worn, my lord?

DON SILVA.

No, love, I never wore it. Lay it down.

(*He puts the necklace gently out of her hand, then joins both her hands and holds them up between his own.*)

You must not look at jewels any more,
But look at me.

FEDALMA (*looking up at him*).

O you dear heaven!
I should see naught if you were gone. 'T is true
My mind is too much given to gauds, — to things
That fetter thought within this narrow space.
That comes of fear.

DON SILVA.

What fear?

FEDALMA.

Fear of myself.
For when I walk upon the battlements
And see the river travelling toward the plain,
The mountains screening all the world beyond,

A longing comes that haunts me in my dreams, —
Dreams where I seem to spring from off the walls,
And fly far, far away, until at last
I find myself alone among the rocks,
Remember then that I have left you, — try
To fly back to you, — and my wings are gone!

Don Silva.

A wicked dream! If ever I left you,
Even in dreams, it was some demon dragged me,
And with fierce struggles I awaked myself.

Fedalma.

It is a hateful dream, and when it comes, —
I mean, when in my waking hours there comes
That longing to be free, I am afraid:
I run down to my chamber, plait my hair,
Weave colors in it, lay out all my gauds,
And in my mind make new ones prettier.
You see I have two minds, and both are foolish.
Sometimes a torrent rushing through my soul
Escapes in wild strange wishes; presently,
It dwindles to a little babbling rill
And plays among the pebbles and the flowers.
Iñez will have it I lack broidery,
Says naught else gives content to noble maids.
But I have never broidered, — never will.
No, when I am a Duchess and a wife
I shall ride forth — may I not? — by your side.

Don Silva.

Yes, you shall ride upon a palfrey, black
To match Bavieca. Not Queen Isabel
Will be a sight more gladdening to men's eyes,
Than my dark queen Fedalma.

FEDALMA.

Ah, but you,
You are my king, and I shall tremble still
With some great fear that throbs within my love.
Does your love fear?

DON SILVA.

Ah, yes! all preciousness
To mortal hearts is guarded by a fear.
All love fears loss, and most that loss supreme,
Its own perfection, — seeing, feeling change
From high to lower, dearer to less dear.
Can love be careless? If we lost our love
What should we find? — with this sweet Past torn off,
Our lives deep scarred just where their beauty lay?
The best we found thenceforth were still a worse:
The only better is a Past that lives
On through an added Present, stretching still
In hope unchecked by shaming memories
To life's last breath. And so I tremble too
Before my queen Fedalma.

FEDALMA.

That is just.
'T were hard of Love to make us women fear
And leave you bold. Yet Love is not quite even.
For feeble creatures, little birds and fawns,
Are shaken more by fear, while large strong things
Can bear it stoutly. So we women still
Are not well dealt with. Yet would I choose to be
Fedalma loving Silva. You, my lord,
Hold the worse share, since you must love poor me.
But is it what we love, or how we love,
That makes true good?

DON SILVA.

O subtlety! for me
'T is what I love determines how I love.
The goddess with pure rites reveals herself
And makes pure worship.

FEDALMA.

Do you worship me?

DON SILVA.

Ay, with that best of worship which adores
Goodness adorable.

FEDALMA (*archly*).

Goodness obedient,
Doing your will, devoutest worshipper?

DON SILVA.

Yes, — listening to this prayer. This very night
I shall go forth. And you will rise with day
And wait for me?

FEDALMA.

Yes.

DON SILVA.

I shall surely come.
And then we shall be married. Now I go
To audience fixed in Abderahman's tower.
Farewell, love! (*They embrace.*)

FEDALMA.

Some chill dread possesses me!

DON SILVA.

Oh, confidence has oft been evil augury,
So dread may hold a promise. Sweet, farewell!

I shall send tendance as I pass, to bear
This casket to your chamber. — One more kiss.

(*Exit.*)

FEDALMA (*when* DON SILVA *is gone, returning to the casket, and looking dreamily at the jewels*).

Yes, now that good seems less impossible!
Now it seems true that I shall be his wife,
Be ever by his side, and make a part
In all his purposes. . . . .
These rubies greet me Duchess. How they glow!
Their prisoned souls are throbbing like my own.
Perchance they loved once, were ambitious, proud;
Or do they only dream of wider life,
Ache from intenseness, yearn to burst the wall
Compact of crystal splendor, and to flood
Some wider space with glory? Poor, poor gems!
We must be patient in our prison-house,
And find our space in loving. Pray you, love me.
Let us be glad together. And you, gold, —

(*She takes up the gold necklace.*)

You wondrous necklace, — will you love me too,
And be my amulet to keep me safe
From eyes that hurt?

(*She spreads out the necklace, meaning to clasp it on her neck. Then pauses, startled, holding it before her.*)

Why, it is magical!
He says he never wore it, — yet these lines, —
Nay, if he had, I should remember well
'T was he, no other. And these twisted lines, —
They seem to speak to me as writing would,
To bring a message from the dead, dead past.
What is their secret? Are they characters?

I never learned them ; yet they stir some sense
That once I dreamed, — I have forgotten what.
Or was it life ? Perhaps I lived before
In some strange world where first my soul was shaped,
And all this passionate love, and joy, and pain,
That come, I know not whence, and sway my deeds,
Are dim yet mastering memories, blind yet strong,
That this world stirs within me ; as this chain
Stirs some strange certainty of visions gone,
And all my mind is as an eye that stares
Into the darkness painfully.

(*While* FEDALMA *has been looking at the necklace,* JUAN *has entered, and finding himself unobserved by her, says at last,*)

Señora !

FEDALMA *starts, and gathering the necklace together turns round* —

O Juan, it is you !

JUAN.

I met the Duke, —
Had waited long without, no matter why, —
And when he ordered one to wait on you
And carry forth a burden you would give,
I prayed for leave to be the servitor.
Don Silva owes me twenty granted wishes
That I have never tendered, lacking aught
That I could wish for and a Duke could grant ;
But this one wish to serve you, weighs as much
As twenty other longings.

FEDALMA (*smiling*).

That sounds well
You turn your speeches prettily as songs

But I will not forget the many days
You have neglected me. Your pupil learns
But little from you now. Her studies flag.
The Duke says, "That is idle Juan's way:
Poets must rove, — are honey-sucking birds
And know not constancy." Said he quite true?

JUAN.

O lady, constancy has kind and rank.
One man's is lordly, plump, and bravely clad,
Holds its head high, and tells the world its name
Another man's is beggared, must go bare,
And shiver through the world, the jest of all,
But that it puts the motley on, and plays
Itself the jester. But I see you hold
The Gypsy's necklace: it is quaintly wrought.

FEDALMA.

The Gypsy's? Do you know its history?

JUAN.

No further back than when I saw it taken
From off its wearer's neck, — the Gypsy chief's.

FEDALMA (*eagerly*).

What! he who paused, at tolling of the bell,
Before me in the Plaça?

JUAN.

Yes, I saw
His look fixed on you.

FEDALMA.

Know you aught of him?

JUAN.

Something and nothing, — as I know the sky,
Or some great story of the olden time

That hides a secret. I have oft talked with him.
He seems to say much, yet is but a wizard
Who draws down rain by sprinkling; throws me out
Some pregnant text that urges comment; casts
A sharp-hooked question, baited with such skill
It needs must catch the answer.

FEDALMA.

It is hard
That such a man should be a prisoner, —
Be chained to work.

JUAN.

Oh, he is dangerous!
Granáda with this Zarca for a king
Might still maim Christendom. He is of those
Who steal the keys from snoring Destiny
And make the prophets lie. A Gypsy, too,
Suckled by hunted beasts, whose mother-milk
Has filled his veins with hate.

FEDALMA.

I thought his eyes
Spoke not of hatred, — seemed to say he bore
The pain of those who never could be saved.
What if the Gypsies are but savage beasts
And must be hunted? — let them be set free,
Have benefit of chase, or stand at bay
And fight for life and offspring. Prisoners!
Oh, they have made their fires beside the streams,
Their walls have been the rocks, the pillared pines,
Their roof the living sky that breathes with light:
They may well hate a cage, like strong-winged birds,
Like me, who have no wings, but only wishes.
I will beseech the Duke to set them free.

JUAN.

Pardon me, lady, if I seem to warn,
Or try to play the sage. What if the Duke
Loved not to hear of Gypsies? if their name
Were poisoned for him once, being used amiss?
I speak not as of fact. Our nimble souls
Can spin an insubstantial universe
Suiting our mood, and call it possible,
Sooner than see one grain with eye exact
And give strict record of it. Yet by chance
Our fancies may be truth and make us seers.
'T is a rare teeming world, so harvest-full,
Even guessing ignorance may pluck some fruit.
Note what I say no further than will stead
The siege you lay. I would not seem to tell
Aught that the Duke may think and yet withhold:
It were a trespass in me.

FEDALMA.

Fear not, Juan.
Your words bring daylight with them when you speak.
I understand your care. But I am brave, —
Oh, and so cunning! — always I prevail.
Now, honored Troubadour, if you will be
Your pupil's servant, bear this casket hence.
Nay, not the necklace: it is hard to place.
Pray go before me; Iñez will be there.

(*Exit* JUAN *with the casket.*)

FEDALMA (*looking again at the necklace*).

It is *his* past clings to you, not my own.
If we have each our angels, good and bad,
Fates, separate from ourselves, who act for us
When we are blind, or sleep, then this man's fate,

Hovering about the thing he used to wear,
Has laid its grasp on mine appealingly.
Dangerous, is he? — well, a Spanish knight
Would have his enemy strong, — defy, not bind him.
I can dare all things when my soul is moved
By something hidden that possesses me.
If Silva said this man must keep his chains
I should find ways to free him, — disobey
And free him as I did the birds. But no!
As soon as we are wed, I'll put my prayer,
And he will not deny me: he is good.
Oh, I shall have much power as well as joy!
Duchess Fedalma may do what she will.

A Street by the Castle. JUAN *leans against a parapet, in moonlight, and touches his lute half unconsciously.* PEPITA *stands on tiptoe watching him, and then advances till her shadow falls in front of him. He looks towards her. A piece of white drapery thrown over her head catches the moonlight.*

JUAN.

Ha! my Pepíta! see how thin and long
Your shadow is. 'T is so your ghost will be,
When you are dead.

PEPITA (*crossing herself*).

Dead! — Oh the blessed saints!
You would be glad, then, if Pepíta died?

JUAN.

Glad! why? Dead maidens are not merry. Ghosts
Are doleful company. I like you living.

PEPITA.

I think you like me not. I wish you did.
Sometimes you sing to me and make me dance.
Another time you take no heed of me,
Not though I kiss my hand to you and smile.
But Andrès would be glad if I kissed *him*.

JUAN.

My poor Pepíta, I am old.

PEPITA.

No, no.
You have no wrinkles.

JUAN.

Yes, I have — within;
The wrinkles are within, my little bird.
Why, I have lived through twice a thousand years,
And kept the company of men whose bones
Crumbled before the blessed Virgin lived.

PEPITA (*crossing herself*).

Nay, God defend us, that is wicked talk!
You say it but to scorn me. (*With a sob.*) I will go.

JUAN.

Stay, little pigeon. I am not unkind.
Come, sit upon the wall. Nay, never cry.
Give me your cheek to kiss. There, cry no more!

(PEPITA, *sitting on the low parapet, puts up her cheek to* JUAN, *who kisses it, putting his hand under her chin. She takes his hand and kisses it.*)

PEPITA.

I like to kiss your hand. It is so good, —
So smooth and soft.

JUAN.

Well, well, I 'll sing to you.

PEPITA.

A pretty song, loving and merry?

JUAN.

Yes.

(JUAN *sings.*)

Memory,
Tell to me
What is fair,
Past compare,
In the land of Tubal?

Is it Spring's
Lovely things,
Blossoms white,
Rosy dight?
Then it is Pepita.

Summer's crest
Red-gold tressed,
Corn-flowers peeping under? —
Idle noons,
Lingering moons,
Sudden cloud,
Lightning's shroud,
Sudden rain,
Quick again
Smiles where late was thunder? —

Are all these
Made to please?
So too is Pepíta.

Autumn's prime,
Apple-time,
Smooth cheek round,
Heart all sound?—
Is it this
You would kiss?
Then it is Pepíta.

You can bring
No sweet thing,
But my mind
Still shall find
It is my Pepíta.

Memory
Says to me
It is she,—
She is fair
Past compare
In the land of Tubal.

PEPITA (*seizing* JUAN'S *hand again*).

Oh, then, you do love me?

JUAN.

Yes, in the song.

PEPITA (*sadly*).

Not out of it? — not love me out of it?

JUAN.

Only a little out of it, my bird.
When I was singing I was Andrès, say,
Or one who loves you better still than Andrès.

PEPITA.

Not yourself?

JUAN.

No!

PEPITA (*throwing his hand down pettishly*).

Then take it back again!
I will not have it!

JUAN.

Listen, little one.
Juan is not a living man all by himself:
His life is breathed in him by other men,
And they speak out of him. He is their voice.
Juan's own life he gave once quite away.
It was Pepíta's lover singing then, — not Juan.
We old, old poets, if we kept our hearts,
Should hardly know them from another man's.
They shrink to make room for the many more
We keep within us. There, now, — one more kiss,
And then go home again.

PEPITA (*a little frightened, after letting* JUAN *kiss her*).

You are not wicked?

JUAN.

Ask your confessor, — tell him what I said.

(PEPITA *goes, while* JUAN *thrums his lute again, and sings.*)

Came a pretty maid
By the moon's pure light,
Loved me well, she said,
Eyes with tears all bright,
A pretty maid!

But too late she strayed,
Moonlight pure was there;
She was naught but shade
Hiding the more fair,
The heavenly maid!

A vaulted room all stone. The light shed from a high lamp. Wooden chairs, a desk, book-shelves. The PRIOR, *in white frock, a black rosary with a crucifix of ebony and ivory at his side, is walking up and down, holding a written paper in his hands, which are clasped behind him.*

What if this witness lies? he says he heard her
Counting her blasphemies on a rosary,
And in a bold discourse with Salomo,
Say that the Host was naught but ill-mixed flour,
That it was mean to pray, — she never prayed.
I know the man who wrote this for a cur,
Who follows Don Diego, sees life's good
In scraps my nephew flings to him. What then?
Particular lies may speak a general truth.
I guess him false, but know her heretic, —
Know her for Satan's instrument, bedecked
With heathenish charms, luring the souls of men
To damning trust in good unsanctified.
Let her be prisoned, — questioned, — she will give
Witness against herself, that were this false . . . .

(*He looks at the paper again and reads, then again thrusts it behind him.*)

The matter and the color are not false:
The form concerns the witness, not the judge;
For proof is gathered by the sifting mind,
Not given in crude and formal circumstance.

Suspicion is a heaven-sent lamp, and I, —
I, watchman of the Holy Office, bear
That lamp in trust. I will keep faithful watch.
The Holy Inquisition's discipline
Is mercy, saving her, if penitent, —
God grant it! — else, — root up the poison-plant,
Though 't were a lily with a golden heart!
This spotless maiden with her pagan soul
Is the arch-enemy's trap: he turns his back
On all the prostitutes, and watches her
To see her poison men with false belief
In rebel virtues. She has poisoned Silva;
His shifting mind, dangerous in fitfulness,
Strong in the contradiction of itself,
Carries his young ambitions wearily,
As holy vows regretted. Once he seemed
The fresh-oped flower of Christian knighthood, born
For feats of holy daring; and I said:
"That half of life which I, as monk, renounce
Shall be fulfilled in him: Silva will be
That saintly noble, that wise warrior,
That blameless excellence in worldly gifts
I would have been, had I not asked to live
The higher life of man impersonal
Who reigns o'er all things by refusing all.
What is his promise now? Apostasy
From every high intent: — languid, nay, gone,
The prompt devoutness of a generous heart,
The strong obedience of a reverent will,
That breathes the Church's air and sees her light.
He peers and strains with feeble questioning.
Or else he jests. He thinks I know it not, —
I who have read the history of his lapse,
As clear as it is writ in the angel's book.
He will defy me, — flings great words at me, —

Me who have governed all our house's acts,
Since I, a stripling, ruled his stripling father.
This maiden is the cause, and if they wed,
The Holy War may count a captain lost.
For better he were dead than keep his place,
And fill it infamously: in God's war
Slackness is infamy. Shall I stand by
And let the tempter win? defraud Christ's cause,
And blot his banner? — all for scruples weak
Of pity towards their young and frolicsome blood;
Or nice discrimination of the tool
By which my hand shall work a sacred rescue?
The fence of rules is for the purblind crowd;
They walk by averaged precepts; sovereign men,
Seeing by God's light, see the general
By seeing all the special, — own no rule
But their full vision of the moment's worth.
'T is so God governs, using wicked men, —
Nay, scheming fiends, to work his purposes.
Evil that good may come? Measure the good
Before you say what 's evil. Perjury?
I scorn the perjurer, but I will use him
To serve the holy truth. There is no lie
Save in his soul, and let his soul be judged.
I know the truth, and act upon the truth.

O God, thou knowest that my will is pure.
Thy servant owns naught for himself, his wealth
Is but obedience. And I have sinned
In keeping small respects of human love, —
Calling it mercy. Mercy? Where evil is
True mercy must be terrible. Mercy would save.
Save whom? Save serpents, locusts, wolves?
Or out of pity let the idiots gorge
Within a famished town? Or save the gains

Of men who trade in poison lest they starve?
Save all things mean and foul that clog the earth
Stifling the better? Save the fools who cling
For refuge round their hideous idol's limbs,
So leave the idol grinning unconsumed,
And save the fools to breed idolaters?
Oh mercy worthy of the licking hound
That knows no future but its feeding time!
Mercy has eyes that pierce the ages, — sees
From heights divine of the eternal purpose
Far-scattered consequence in its vast sum;
Chooses to save, but with illumined vision
Sees that to save is greatly to destroy.
'T is so the Holy Inquisition sees: its wrath
Is fed from the strong heart of wisest love.
For love must needs make hatred. He who loves
God and his law must hate the foes of God.
And I have sinned in being merciful:
Being slack in hate, I have been slack in love.
(*He takes the crucifix and holds it up before him.*)
Thou shuddering, bleeding, thirsting, dying God,
Thou Man of Sorrows, scourged and bruised and torn,
Suffering to save, — wilt thou not judge the world?
This arm which held the children, this pale hand
That gently touched the eyelids of the blind,
And opened passive to the cruel nail,
Shall one day stretch to leftward of thy throne,
Charged with the power that makes the lightning strong,
And hurl thy foes to everlasting hell.
And thou, Immaculate Mother, Virgin mild,
Thou sevenfold-pierced, thou pitying, pleading Queen,
Shalt see and smile, while the black filthy souls
Sink with foul weight to their eternal place,
Purging the Holy Light. Yea, I have sinned
And called it mercy. But I shrink no more.

To-morrow morn this temptress shall be safe
Under the Holy Inquisition's key.
He thinks to wed her, and defy me then,
She being shielded by our house's name.
But he shall never wed her. I have said.

The time is come. *Exurge, Domine,*
Judica causam tuam. Let thy foes
Be driven as the smoke before the wind,
And melt like wax upon the furnace lip!

A large chamber richly furnished opening on a terrace-garden, the trees visible through the window in faint moonlight. Flowers hanging about the window, lit up by the tapers. The casket of jewels open on a table. The gold necklace lying near. FEDALMA, *splendidly dressed and adorned with pearls and rubies, is walking up and down.*

So soft a night was never made for sleep,
But for the waking of the finer sense
To every murmuring and gentle sound,
To subtlest odors, pulses, visitings
That touch our frames with wings too delicate
To be discerned amid the blare of day.

(*She pauses near the window to gather some jasmine: then walks again.*)

Surely these flowers keep happy watch, — their breath
Is their fond memory of the loving light.
I often rue the hours I lose in sleep:
It is a bliss too brief, only to see
This glorious world, to hear the voice of love,
To feel the touch, the breath of tenderness,
And then to rest as from a spectacle.

I need the curtained stillness of the night
To live through all my happy hours again
With more selection, — cull them quite away
From blemished moments. Then in loneliness
The face that bent before me in the day
Rises in its own light, more vivid seems
Painted upon the dark, and ceaseless glows
With sweet solemnity of gazing love,
Till like the heavenly blue it seems to grow
Nearer, more kindred, and more cherishing,
Mingling with all my being. Then the words,
The tender low-toned words come back again,
With repetition welcome as the chime
Of softly hurrying brooks, — "My only love, —
My love while life shall last, — my own Fedalma!"
Oh, it is mine, — the joy that once has been!
Poor eager hope is but a stammerer,
Must listen dumbly to great memory,
Who makes our bliss the sweeter by her telling.

(*She pauses a moment musingly.*)

But that dumb hope is still a sleeping guard
Whose quiet rhythmic breath saves me from dread
In this fair paradise. For if the earth
Broke off with flower-fringed edge, visibly sheer,
Leaving no footing for my forward step
But empty blackness . . . .
Nay, there is no fear, —
They will renew themselves, day and my joy,
And all that past which is securely mine,
Will be the hidden root that nourishes
Our still unfolding, ever-ripening love!

(*While she is uttering the last words, a little bird falls softly on the floor behind her; she hears the light sound of its fall and turns round.*)

Did something enter? . . . .
Yes, this little bird . . . .
(*She lifts it.*)
Dead and yet warm: 't was seeking sanctuary,
And died, perhaps of fright, at the altar foot.
Stay, there is something tied beneath the wing!
A strip of linen, streaked with blood, — what blood?
The streaks are written words, — are sent to me, —
O God, are sent to me! *Dear child, Fedalma,*
Be brave, give no alarm, — your Father comes!
(*She lets the bird fall again.*)
My Father . . . . comes . . . . my Father. . . . .

(*She turns in quivering expectation toward the window. There is perfect stillness a few moments until* Zarca *appears at the window. He enters quickly and noiselessly; then stands still at his full height, and at a distance from* Fedalma.)

Fedalma (*in a low distinct tone of terror*).
It is he!
I said his fate had laid its hold on mine.

Zarca (*advancing a step or two*).
You know, then, who I am?

Fedalma.
The prisoner, —
He whom I saw in fetters, — and this necklace —

Zarca.
Was played with by your fingers when it hung
About my neck, full fifteen years ago!

Fedalma (*starts, looks at the necklace and handles it, then speaks as if unconsciously*).
Full fifteen years ago!



"My father . . . comes . . . my father."

ZARCA.

The very day
I lost you, when you wore a tiny gown
Of scarlet cloth with golden broidery:
'T was clasped in front by coins, — two golden coins.
The one towards the left was split in two
Across the King's head, right from brow to nape,
A dent i' the middle nicking in the cheek.
You see I know the little gown by heart.

FEDALMA (*growing paler and more tremulous*).

Yes. It is true, — I have the gown, — the clasps, —
The braid, — sore tarnished: — it is long ago!

ZARCA.

But yesterday to me; for till to-day
I saw you always as that little child.
And when they took my necklace from me, still
Your fingers played about it on my neck,
And still those buds of fingers on your feet
Caught in its meshes as you seemed to climb
Up to my shoulder. You were not stolen all.
You had a double life fed from my heart. . . . .

(FEDALMA, *letting fall the necklace, makes an impulsive movement towards him with outstretched hands.*)

For the Zincalo loves his children well.

FEDALMA (*shrinking, trembling, and letting fall her hands*).

How came it that you sought me, — no, — I mean
How came it that you knew me, — that you lost me?

ZARCA (*standing perfectly still*).

Poor child! I see, I see, — your ragged father
Is welcome as the piercing wintry wind

Within this silken chamber. It is well.
I would not have a child who stooped to feign,
And aped a sudden love. True hate were better.

FEDALMA (*raising her eyes towards him, with a flash of admiration, and looking at him fixedly*).

Father, how was it that we lost each other?

ZARCA.

I lost you as a man may lose a diamond
Wherein he has compressed his total wealth,
Or the right hand whose cunning makes him great:
I lost you by a trivial accident.
Marauding Spaniards, sweeping like a storm
Over a spot within the Moorish bounds,
Near where our camp lay, doubtless snatched you up,
When Zind, your nurse, as she confessed, was urged
By burning thirst to wander towards the stream,
And leave you on the sand some paces off
Playing with pebbles, while she dog-like lapped.
'T was so I lost you, — never saw you more
Until to-day I saw you dancing! Saw
The child of the Zincalo making sport
For those who spit upon her people's name.

FEDALMA (*vehemently*).

It was not sport. What if the world looked on? —
I danced for joy, — for love of all the world.
But when you looked at me my joy was stabbed, —
Stabbed with your pain. I wondered .... now I know ....
It was my father's pain.

(*She pauses a moment with eyes bent downward, during which* ZARCA *examines her face. Then she says quickly,*)

How were you sure
At once I was your child?

ZARCA.

Oh, I had witness strong
As any Cadi needs, before I saw you!
I fitted all my memories with the chat
Of one named Juan, — one whose rapid talk
Showers like the blossoms from a light-twigged shrub,
If you but coughed beside it. I learned all
The story of your Spanish nurture, — all
The promise of your fortune. When at last
I fronted you, my little maid full-grown,
Belief was turned to vision: then I saw
That she whom Spaniards called the bright Fedalma, —
The little red-frocked foundling three years old, —
Grown to such perfectness the Christian Duke
Had wooed her for his Duchess, — was the child,
Sole offspring of my flesh, that Lambra bore
One hour before the Christian, hunting us,
Hurried her on to death. Therefore I sought you,
Therefore I come to claim you — claim my child,
Not from the Spaniard, not from him who robbed,
But from herself.

(FEDALMA *has gradually approached close to* ZARCA, *and with a low sob sinks on her knees before him. He stoops to kiss her brow, and lays his hands on her head.*)

ZARCA (*with solemn tenderness*).

Then my child owns her father?

FEDALMA.

Father! yes.
I will eat dust before I will deny
The flesh I spring from.

ZARCA.

There my daughter spoke
Away then with these rubies!

(*He seizes the circlet of rubies and flings it on the ground.* FEDALMA, *starting from the ground with strong emotion, shrinks backward.*)

Such a crown
Is infamy on a Zincala's brow.
It is her people's blood, decking her shame.

FEDALMA (*after a moment, slowly and distinctly, as if accepting a doom*).

Then .... I am .... a Zincala?

ZARCA.

Of a blood
Unmixed as virgin wine-juice.

FEDALMA.

Of a race
More outcast and despised than Moor or Jew?

ZARCA.

Yes: wanderers whom no god took knowledge of
To give them laws, to fight for them, or blight
Another race to make them ampler room;
A people with no home even in memory,
No dimmest lore of giant ancestors
To make a common hearth for piety.

FEDALMA.

A race that lives on prey as foxes do
With stealthy, petty rapine: so despised,
It is not persecuted, only spurned,
Crushed underfoot, warred on by chance like rats
Or swarming flies, or reptiles of the sea

Dragged in the net unsought, and flung far off
To perish as they may?

ZARCA.

You paint us well.
So abject are the men whose blood we share;
Untutored, unbefriended, unendowed;
No favorites of heaven or of men.
Therefore I cling to them! Therefore no lure
Shall draw me to disown them, or forsake
The meagre wandering herd that lows for help
And needs me for its guide, to seek my pasture
Among the well-fed beeves that graze at will.
Because our race have no great memories,
I will so live they shall remember me
For deeds of such divine beneficence
As rivers have, that teach men what is good
By blessing them. I have been schooled, — have caught
Lore from the Hebrew, deftness from the Moor, —
Know the rich heritage, the milder life,
Of nations fathered by a mighty Past;
But were our race accursed (as they who make
Good luck a god count all unlucky men)
I would espouse their curse sooner than take
My gifts from brethren naked of all good,
And lend them to the rich for usury.

(FEDALMA *again advances, and putting forth her right hand grasps* ZARCA'S *left. He places his other hand on her shoulder. They stand so looking at each other.*)

ZARCA.

And you, my child? are you of other mind,
Choosing forgetfulness, hating the truth
That says you are akin to needy men? —

Wishing your father were some Christian Duke,
Who could hang Gypsies when their task was done,
While you, his daughter, were not bound to care?

FEDALMA (*in a troubled, eager voice*).

No, I should always care — I cared for you —
For all, before I dreamed . . . .

ZARCA.

Before you dreamed
You were a born Zincala, — in the bonds
Of the Zincali's faith.

FEDALMA (*bitterly*).

Zincali's faith?
Men say they have none.

ZARCA.

Oh, it is a faith
Taught by no priest, but by their beating hearts.
Faith to each other: the fidelity
Of fellow-wanderers in a desert place
Who share the same dire thirst, and therefore share
The scanty water: the fidelity
Of men whose pulses leap with kindred fire,
Who in the flash of eyes, the clasp of hands,
The speech that even in lying tells the truth
Of heritage inevitable as past deeds,
Nay, in the silent bodily presence feel
The mystic stirring of a common life
Which makes the many one: fidelity
To that deep consecrating oath our sponsor Fate
Made through our infant breath when we were born,
The fellow-heirs of that small island, Life,
Where we must dig and sow and reap with brothers.

Fear thou that oath, my daughter, — nay, not fear,
But love it; for the sanctity of oaths
Lies not in lightning that avenges them,
But in the injury wrought by broken bonds
And in the garnered good of human trust.
And you have sworn, — even with your infant breath
You too were pledged . . . .

FEDALMA (*lets go* ZARCA'S *hand and sinks backward on her knees, with bent head, as if before some impending crushing weight*).

What have I sworn?

ZARCA.

To live the life of the Zincala's child:
The child of him who, being chief, will be
The savior of his tribe, or if he fail
Will choose to fail rather than basely win
The prize of renegades. Nay — will not choose —
Is there a choice for strong souls to be weak?
For men erect to crawl like hissing snakes?
I choose not, — I *am* Zarca. Let him choose
Who halts and wavers, having appetite
To feed on garbage. You, my child, — are you
Halting and wavering?

FEDALMA (*raising her head*).

Say what is my task?

ZARCA.

To be the angel of a homeless tribe.
To help me bless a race taught by no prophet,
And make their name, now but a badge of scorn,
A glorious banner floating in their midst,
Stirring the air they breathe with impulses
Of generous pride, exalting fellowship

Until it soars to magnanimity.
I 'll guide my brethren forth to their new land,
Where they shall plant and sow and reap their own,
Serving each other's needs, and so be spurred
To skill in all the arts that succor life;
Where we may kindle our first altar-fire
From settled hearths, and call our Holy Place
The hearth that binds us in one family.
That land awaits them: they await their chief, —
Me who am prisoned. All depends on you.

FEDALMA (*rising to her full height, and looking solemnly at* ZARCA).

Father, your child is ready! She will not
Forsake her kindred: she will brave all scorn
Sooner than scorn herself. Let Spaniards all,
Christians, Jews, Moors, shoot out the lip and say,
"Lo, the first hero in a tribe of thieves."
Is it not written so of them? They, too,
Were slaves, lost, wandering, sunk beneath a curse
Till Moses, Christ, and Mahomet were born,
Till beings lonely in their greatness lived,
And lived to save their people. Father, listen.
To-morrow the Duke weds me secretly:
But straight he will present me as his wife
To all his household, cavaliers and dames
And noble pages. Then I will declare
Before them all: "I am his daughter, his,
The Gypsy's, owner of this golden badge."
Then I shall win your freedom; then the Duke, —
Why, he will be your son! — will send you forth
With aid and honors. Then, before all eyes
I 'll clasp this badge on you, and lift my brow
For you to kiss it, saying by that sign,
"I glory in my father." This, to-morrow.

ZARCA.

A woman's dream, — who thinks by smiling well
To ripen figs in frost. What! marry first,
And then proclaim your birth? Enslave yourself
To use your freedom? Share another's name,
Then treat it as you will? How will that tune
Ring in your bridegroom's ears, — that sudden song
Of triumph in your Gypsy father?

FEDALMA (*discouraged*).

Nay,
I meant not so. We marry hastily —
Yet there is time — there will be: — in less space
Than he can take to look at me, I 'll speak
And tell him all. Oh, I am not afraid!
His love for me is stronger than all hate;
Nay, stronger than my love, which cannot sway
Demons that haunt me, — tempt me to rebel.
Were he Fedalma and I Silva, he
Could love confession, prayers, and tonsured monks
If my soul craved them. He will never hate
The race that bore him what he loves the most.
I shall but do more strongly what I will,
Having his will to help me. And to-morrow,
Father, as surely as this heart shall beat,
You, every chained Zincalo, shall be free.

ZARCA (*coming nearer to her, and laying his hand on her shoulder*).

Too late, too poor a service that, my child!
Not so the woman who would save her tribe
Must help its heroes, — not by wordy breath,
By easy prayers strong in a lover's ear,
By showering wreaths and sweets and wafted kisses,
And then, when all the smiling work is done,

Turning to rest upon her down again,
And whisper languid pity for her race
Upon the bosom of her alien spouse.
Not to such petty mercies as can fall
'Twixt stitch and stitch of silken broidery work,
Such miracles of mitred saints who pause
Beneath their gilded canopy to heal
A man sun-stricken : not to such trim merit
As soils its dainty shoes for charity
And simpers meekly at the pious stain,
But never trod with naked bleeding feet
Where no man praised it, and where no Church blessed :
Not to such almsdeeds fit for holidays
Were you, my daughter, consecrated, — bound
By laws that, breaking, you will dip your bread
In murdered brother's blood and call it sweet, —
When you were born in the Zincalo's tent,
And lifted up in sight of all your tribe,
Who greeted you with shouts of loyal joy,
Sole offspring of the chief in whom they trust
As in the oft-tried never-failing flint
They strike their fire from. Other work is yours.

FEDALMA.

What work ? — what is it that you ask of me ?

ZARCA.

A work as pregnant as the act of men
Who set their ships aflame and spring to land,
A fatal deed . . . .

FEDALMA.

Stay ! never utter it !
If it can part my lot from his whose love
Has chosen me. Talk not of oaths, of birth,
Of men as numerous as the dim white stars, —
As cold and distant, too, for my heart's pulse.

No ills on earth, though you should count them up
With grains to make a mountain, can outweigh
For me, his ill who is my supreme love.
All sorrows else are but imagined flames,
Making me shudder at an unfelt smart,
But his imagined sorrow is a fire
That scorches me.

ZARCA.

I know, I know it well, —
The first young passionate wail of spirits called
To some great destiny. In vain, my daughter!
Lay the young eagle in what nest you will,
The cry and swoop of eagles overhead
Vibrate prophetic in its kindred frame,
And make it spread its wings and poise itself
For the eagle's flight. Hear what you have to do.

(FEDALMA *breaks from him and stands half averted, as if she dreaded the effect of his looks and words.*)

My comrades even now file off their chains
In a low turret by the battlements,
Where we were locked with slight and sleepy guard, —
We who had files hid in our shaggy hair,
And possible ropes that waited but our will
In half our garments. Oh, the Moorish blood
Runs thick and warm to us, though thinned by chrism.
I found a friend among our jailers, — one
Who loves the Gypsy as the Moor's ally.
I know the secrets of this fortress. Listen.
Hard by yon terrace is a narrow stair,
Cut in the living rock, and at one point
In its slow straggling course it branches off
Towards a low wooden door, that art has bossed
To such unevenness, it seems one piece

With the rough-hewn rock. Opened, it leads
Through a broad passage burrowed underground
A good half-mile out to the open plain:
Made for escape, in dire extremity
From siege or burning, of the house's wealth
In women or in gold. To find that door
Needs one who knows the number of the steps
Just to the turning-point; to open it,
Needs one who knows the secret of the bolt.
You have that secret: you will ope that door,
And fly with us.

FEDALMA (*receding a little, and gathering herself up in an attitude of resolve opposite to Zarca*).

No, I will never fly!
Never forsake that chief half of my soul
Where lies my love. I swear to set you free.
Ask for no more; it is not possible.
Father, my soul is not too base to ring
At touch of your great thoughts; nay, in my blood
There streams the sense unspeakable of kind,
As leopard feels at ease with leopard. But,—
Look at these hands! You say when they were little
They played about the gold upon your neck.
I do believe it, for their tiny pulse
Made record of it in the inmost coil
Of growing memory. But see them now!
Oh they have made fresh record; twined themselves
With other throbbing hands whose pulses feed
Not memories only but a blended life,—
Life that will bleed to death if it be severed.
Have pity on me, father! Wait the morning;
Say you will wait the morning. I will win
Your freedom openly: you shall go forth
With aid and honors. Silva will deny
Naught to my asking . . . .

ZARCA (*with contemptuous decision*).

Till you ask him aught
Wherein he is powerless. Soldiers even now
Murmur against him that he risks the town,
And forfeits all the prizes of a foray
To get his bridal pleasure with a bride
Too low for him. They 'll murmur more and louder
If captives of our pith and sinew, fit
For all the work the Spaniard hates, are freed, —
Now, too, when Spanish hands are scanty. What,
Turn Gypsies loose instead of hanging them!
'T is flat against the edict. Nay, perchance
Murmurs aloud may turn to silent threats
Of some well-sharpened dagger; for your Duke
Has to his heir a pious cousin, who deems
The Cross were better served if he were Duke.
Such good you 'll work your lover by your prayers.

FEDALMA.

Then, I will free you now! You shall be safe,
Nor he be blamed, save for his love to me.
I will declare what I have done: the deed
May put our marriage off. . . . .

ZARCA.

Ay, till the time
When you shall be a queen in Africa,
And he be prince enough to sue for you.
You cannot free us and come back to him.

FEDALMA.

And why?

ZARCA.

I would compel you to go forth.

FEDALMA.

You tell me that?

ZARCA.

Yes, for I 'd have you choose;
Though, being of the blood you are, — my blood, —
You have no right to choose.

FEDALMA.

I only owe
A daughter's debt; I was not born a slave.

ZARCA.

No, not a slave; but you were born to reign.
'T is a compulsion of a higher sort,
Whose fetters are the net invisible
That holds all life together. Royal deeds
May make long destinies for multitudes,
And you are called to do them. You belong
Not to the petty round of circumstance
That makes a woman's lot, but to your tribe,
Who trust in me and in my blood with trust
That men call blind; but it is only blind
As unyeaned reason is, that growing stirs
Within the womb of superstition.

FEDALMA.

No!
I belong to him who loves me — whom I love —
Who chose me — whom I chose — to whom I pledged
A woman's truth. And that is nature too,
Issuing a fresher law than laws of birth.

ZARCA.

Well, then, unmake yourself from a Zincala, —
Unmake yourself from being child of mine!
Take holy water, cross your dark skin white;
Round your proud eyes to foolish kitten looks;
Walk mincingly, and smirk, and twitch your robe:

Unmake yourself, — doff all the eagle plumes
And be a parrot, chained to a ring that slips
Upon a Spaniard's thumb, at will of his
That you should prattle o'er his words again!
Get a small heart that flutters at the smiles
Of that plump penitent and greedy saint
Who breaks all treaties in the name of God,
Saves souls by confiscation, sends to heaven
The altar-fumes of burning heretics,
And chaffers with the Levite for the gold;
Holds Gypsies beasts unfit for sacrifice,
So sweeps them out like worms alive or dead.
Go, trail your gold and velvet in her presence! —
Conscious Zincala, smile at your rare luck,
While half your brethren . . . .

FEDALMA.

I am not so vile!
It is not to such mockeries that I cling,
Not to the flaring tow of gala-lights:
It is to him — my love — the face of day.

ZARCA.

What, will you part him from the air he breathes,
Never inhale with him although you kiss him?
Will you adopt a soul without its thoughts,
Or grasp a life apart from flesh and blood?
Till then you cannot wed a Spanish Duke
And not wed shame at mention of your race,
And not wed hardness to their miseries, —
Nay, not wed murder. Would you save my life
Yet stab my purpose? maim my every limb,
Put out my eyes, and turn me loose to feed?
Is that salvation? rather drink my blood.
That child of mine who weds my enemy, —
Adores a God who took no heed of Gypsies, —

Forsakes her people, leaves their poverty
To join the luckier crowd that mocks their woes, —
That child of mine is doubly murderess,
Murdering her father's hope, her people's trust.
Such draughts are mingled in your cup of love.
And when you have become a thing so poor,
Your life is all a fashion without law
Save frail conjecture of a changing wish,
Your worshipped sun, your smiling face of day,
Will turn to cloudiness, and you will shiver
In your thin finery of vain desire.
Men call his passion madness; and he, too,
May learn to think it madness: 't is a thought
Of ducal sanity.

FEDALMA.

No, he is true!
And if I part from him I part from joy.
Oh, it was morning with us, — I seemed young.
But now I know I am an aged sorrow, —
My people's sorrow. Father, since I am yours, —
Since I must walk an unslain sacrifice,
Carrying the knife within me, quivering, —
Put cords upon me, drag me to the doom
My birth has laid upon me. See, I kneel:
I cannot will to go.

ZARCA.

Will then to stay!
Say you will take your better, painted such
By blind desire, and choose the hideous worse
For thousands who were happier but for you.
My thirty followers are assembled now
Without this terrace: I your father wait
That you may lead us forth to liberty, —
Restore me to my tribe, — five hundred men

Whom I alone can save, alone can rule,
And plant them as a mighty nation's seed.
Why, vagabonds who clustered round one man,
Their voice of God, their prophet, and their king,
Twice grew to empire on the teeming shores
Of Africa, and sent new royalties
To feed afresh the Arab sway in Spain.
My vagabonds are a seed more generous,
Quick as the serpent, loving as the hound,
And beautiful as disinherited gods.
They have a promised land beyond the sea:
There I may lead them, raise my standard, call
All wandering Zincali to that home,
And make a nation, — bring light, order, law,
Instead of chaos. You, my only heir,
Are called to reign for me when I am gone.
Now choose your deed: to save or to destroy.
You, woman and Zincala, fortunate
Above your fellows, — you who hold a curse
Or blessing in the hollow of your hand, —
Say you will loose that hand from fellowship,
Let go the rescuing rope, hurl all the tribes,
Children and countless beings yet to come,
Down from the upward path of light and joy,
Back to the dark and marshy wilderness
Where life is naught but blind tenacity
Of that which is. Say you will curse your race!

FEDALMA (*rising and stretching out her arms in deprecation*).

No, no, — I will not say it, — I will go!
Father, I choose! I will not take a heaven
Haunted by shrieks of far-off misery.
This deed and I have ripened with the hours:
It is a part of me, — a wakened thought

That, rising like a giant, masters me,
And grows into a doom. O mother life,
That seemed to nourish me so tenderly,
Even in the womb you vowed me to the fire,
Hung on my soul the burden of men's hopes,
And pledged me to redeem! — I 'll pay the debt.
You gave me strength that I should pour it all
Into this anguish. I can never shrink
Back into bliss, — my heart has grown too big
With things that might be. Father, I will go.
I will strip off these gems. Some happier bride
Shall wear them, since Fedalma would be dowered
With naught but curses, dowered with misery
Of men, — of women, who have hearts to bleed
As hers is bleeding.

(*She sinks on a seat, and begins to take off her jewels.*)

Now, good gems, we part.
Speak of me always tenderly to Silva.

(*She pauses, turning to* Zarca.)

O father, will the women of our tribe
Suffer as I do, in the years to come
When you have made them great in Africa?
Redeemed from ignorant ills only to feel
A conscious woe? Then, — is it worth the pains?
Were it not better when we reach that shore
To raise a funeral-pile and perish all?
So closing up a myriad avenues
To misery yet unwrought? My soul is faint, —
Will these sharp pangs buy any certain good?

Zarca.

Nay, never falter: no great deed is done
By falterers who ask for certainty.

No good is certain, but the steadfast mind,
The undivided will to seek the good:
'T is that compels the elements, and wrings
A human music from the indifferent air.
The greatest gift the hero leaves his race
Is to have been a hero. Say we fail! —
We feed the high tradition of the world,
And leave our spirit in Zincalo breasts.

FEDALMA (*unclasping her jewelled belt, and throwing it down*).

Yes, say that we shall fail! I will not count
On aught but being faithful. I will take
This yearning self of mine and strangle it.
I will not be half-hearted: never yet
Fedalma did aught with a wavering soul.
Die, my young joy, — die, all my hungry hopes, —
The milk you cry for from the breast of life
Is thick with curses. Oh, all fatness here
Snatches its meat from leanness, — feeds on graves.
I will seek nothing but to shun what 's base.
The saints were cowards who stood by to see
Christ crucified: they should have flung themselves
Upon the Roman spears, and died in vain, —
The grandest death, to die in vain, — for love
Greater than sways the forces of the world.
That death shall be my bridegroom. I will wed
The curse of the Zincali. Father, come!

ZARCA.

No curse has fallen on us till we cease
To help each other. You, if you are false
To that first fellowship, lay on the curse.
But write now to the Spaniard: briefly say
That I, your father, came; that you obeyed

The fate which made you a Zincala, as his fate
Made him a Spanish duke and Christian knight.
He must not think ....

FEDALMA.

Yes, I will write, but he, —
Oh, he would know it, — he would never think
The chain that dragged me from him could be aught
But scorching iron entering in my soul.

(*She writes.*)

Silva, sole love, — he came, — my father came.
I am the daughter of the Gypsy chief
Who means to be the Savior of our tribe.
He calls on me to live for his great end.
To live? nay, die for it. Fedalma dies
In leaving Silva: all that lives henceforth
Is the Zincala. (*She rises.*)

Father, now I go
To wed my people's lot.

ZARCA.

To wed a crown.
We will make royal the Zincali's lot, —
Give it a country, homes, and monuments
Held sacred through the lofty memories
That we shall leave behind us. Come, my Queen!

FEDALMA.

Stay, my betrothal ring! — one kiss, — farewell!
O love, you were my crown. No other crown
Is aught but thorns on my poor woman's brow.

(*Exeunt.*)

BOOK II.

SILVA was marching homeward while the moon
Still shed mild brightness like the far-off hope
Of those pale virgin lives that wait and pray.
The stars thin-scattered made the heavens large,
Bending in slow procession; in the east
Emergent from the dark waves of the hills,
Seeming a little sister of the moon,
Glowed Venus all unquenched. Silva, in haste,
Exultant and yet anxious, urged his troop
To quick and quicker march: he had delight
In forward stretching shadows, in the gleams
That travelled on the armor of the van,
And in the many-hoofed sound: in all that told
Of hurrying movement to o'ertake his thought
Already in Bedmár, close to Fedalma,
Leading her forth a wedded bride, fast vowed,
Defying Father Isidor. His glance
Took in with much content the priest who rode
Firm in his saddle, stalwart and broad-backed,
Crisp-curled, and comfortably secular,
Right in the front of him. But by degrees
Stealthily faint, disturbing with slow loss
That showed not yet full promise of a gain,
The light was changing and the watch intense
Of moon and stars seemed weary, shivering:
The sharp white brightness passed from off the rocks
Carrying the shadows: beauteous Night lay dead
Under the pall of twilight, and the love-star
Sickened and shrank. The troop was winding now
Upward to where a pass between the peaks

Seemed like an opened gate, — to Silva seemed
An outer-gate of heaven, for through that pass
They entered his own valley, near Bedmár.
Sudden within the pass a horseman rose
One instant dark upon the banner pale
Of rock-cut sky, the next in motion swift
With hat and plume high shaken, — ominous.
Silva had dreamed his future, and the dream
Held not this messenger. A minute more, —
It was his friend Don Alvar whom he saw
Reining his horse up, face to face with him,
Sad as the twilight, all his clothes ill-girt, —
As if he had been roused to see one die,
And brought the news to him whom death had robbed.
Silva believed he saw the worst, — the town
Stormed by the infidel, — or, could it be
Fedalma dragged? — no, there was not yet time.
But with a marble face, he only said,
"What evil, Alvar?"
"What this paper speaks."
It was Fedalma's letter folded close
And mute as yet for Silva. But his friend
Keeping it still sharp-pinched against his breast,
"It will smite hard, my lord: a private grief.
I would not have you pause to read it here.
Let us ride on, — we use the moments best,
Reaching the town with speed. The smaller ill
Is that our Gypsy prisoners have escaped."
"No more. Give me the paper, — nay, I know, —
'T will make no difference. Bid them march on faster."
Silva pushed forward, — held the paper crushed
Close in his right. "They have imprisoned her,"
He said to Alvar in low, hard-cut tones,
Like a dream-speech of slumbering revenge.
"No, — when they came to fetch her she was gone."

Swift as the right touch on a spring, that word
Made Silva read the letter. She was gone!
But not into locked darkness, — only gone
Into free air, — where he might find her yet.
The bitter loss had triumph in it, — what!
They would have seized her with their holy claws?
The Prior's sweet morsel of despotic hate
Was snatched from off his lips. This misery
Had yet a taste of joy.
But she was gone!
The sun had risen, and in the castle walls
The light grew strong and stronger. Silva walked
Through the long corridor where dimness yet
Cherished a lingering, flickering, dying hope:
Fedalma still was there, — he could not see
The vacant place that once her presence filled.
Can we believe that the dear dead are gone?
Love in sad weeds forgets the funeral day,
Opens the chamber door and almost smiles, —
Then sees the sunbeams pierce athwart the bed
Where the pale face is not. So Silva's joy,
Like the sweet habit of caressing hands
That seek the memory of another hand,
Still lived on fitfully in spite of words,
And, numbing thought with vague illusion, dulled
The slow and steadfast beat of certainty.
But in the rooms inexorable light
Streamed through the open window where she fled,
Streamed on the belt and coronet thrown down, —
Mute witnesses, — sought out the typic ring
That sparkled on the crimson, solitary,
Wounding him like a word. O hateful light!
It filled the chambers with her absence, glared
On all the motionless things her hand had touched,
Motionless all, — save where old Iñez lay

Sunk on the floor holding her rosary,
Making its shadow tremble with her fear.
And Silva passed her by because she grieved:
It was the lute, the gems, the pictured heads,
He longed to crush, because they made no sign
But of insistence that she was not there,
She who had filled his sight and hidden them.
He went forth on the terrace tow'rd the stairs,
Saw the rained petals of the cistus flowers
Crushed by large feet; but on one shady spot
Far down the steps, where dampness made a home,
He saw a footprint delicate-slippered, small,
So dear to him, he searched for sister-prints,
Searched in the rock-hewn passage with a lamp
For other trace of her, and found a glove;
But not Fedalma's. It was Juan's glove,
Tasselled, perfumed, embroidered with his name,
A gift of dames. Then Juan, too, was gone?
Full-mouthed conjecture, hurrying through the town,
Had spread the tale already, — it was he
That helped the Gypsies' flight. He talked and sang
Of nothing but the Gypsies and Fedalma.
He drew the threads together, wove the plan.
Had lingered out by moonlight and been seen
Strolling, as was his wont, within the walls,
Humming his ditties. So Don Alvar told,
Conveying outside rumor. But the Duke
Keeping his haughtiness as a visor closed
Would show no agitated front in quest
Of small disclosures. What her writing bore
Had been enough. He knew that she was gone,
Knew why.
"The Duke," some said, "will send a force,
Retake the prisoners, and bring back his bride."
But others, winking, "Nay, her wedding dress

Would be the *san-benito.* 'T is a fight
Between the Duke and Prior. Wise bets will choose
The churchman: he 's the iron, and the Duke " —
" Is a fine piece of pottery," said mine host,
Softening the epigram with a bland regret.

There was the thread that in the new-made knot
Of obstinate circumstance seemed hardest drawn,
Vexed most the sense of Silva, in these hours
Of fresh and angry pain, — there, in that fight
Against a foe whose sword was magical,
His shield invisible terrors, — against a foe
Who stood as if upon the smoking mount
Ordaining plagues. All else, Fedalma's flight,
The father's claim, her Gypsy birth disclosed,
Were momentary crosses, hindrances
A Spanish noble might despise. This Chief
Might still be treated with, would not refuse
A proffered ransom, which would better serve
Gypsy prosperity, give him more power
Over his tribe, than any fatherhood:
Nay, all the father in him must plead loud
For marriage of his daughter where she loved, —
Her love being placed so high and lustrously.
The keen Zincalo had foreseen a price
That would be paid him for his daughter's dower, —
Might soon give signs. Oh, all his purpose lay
Face upward. Silva here felt strong, and smiled.
What could a Spanish noble not command?
He only helped the Queen, because he chose, —
Could war on Spaniards, and could spare the Moor, —
Buy justice, or defeat it, — if he would:
Was loyal, not from weakness but from strength
Of high resolve to use his birthright well.
For nobles too are gods, like Emperors,

Accept perforce their own divinity
And wonder at the virtue of their touch,
Till obstinate resistance shakes their creed,
Shattering that self whose wholeness is not rounded
Save in the plastic souls of other men.
Don Silva had been suckled in that creed
(A speculative noble else, knowing Italian),
Held it absurd as foolish argument
If any failed in deference, was too proud
Not to be courteous to so poor a knave
As one who knew not necessary truths
Of birth and precedence; but cross his will,
The miracle-working will, his rage leaped out
As by a right divine to rage more fatal
Than a mere mortal man's. And now that will
Had met a stronger adversary, — strong
As awful ghosts are whom we cannot touch,
While they grasp *us*, subtly as poisoned air,
In deep-laid fibres of inherited fear
That lie below all courage.
Silva said,
"She is not lost to me, might still be mine
But for the Inquisition, — the dire hand
That waits to clutch her with a hideous grasp,
Not passionate, human, living, but a grasp
As in the death-throe when the human soul
Departs and leaves force unrelenting, locked,
Not to be loosened save by slow decay
That frets the universe. Father Isidor
Has willed it so: his phial dropped the oil
To catch the air-borne motes of idle slander;
He fed the fascinated gaze that clung
Round all her movements, frank as growths of spring,
With the new hateful interest of suspicion.
What barrier is this Gypsy? a mere gate

I 'll find the key for. The one barrier,
The tightening cord that winds about my limbs,
Is this kind uncle, this imperious saint,
He who will save me, guard me from myself.
And he can work his will: I have no help
Save reptile secrecy, and no revenge
Save that I *will* do what he schemes to hinder.
Ay, secrecy, and disobedience, — these
No tyranny can master. Disobey!
You may divide the universe with God,
Keeping your will unbent, and hold a world
Where he is not supreme. The Prior shall know it!
His will shall breed resistance: he shall do
The thing he would not, further what he hates
By hardening my resolve."
But 'neath this inward speech, —
Predominant, hectoring, the more passionate voice
Of many-blended consciousness, — there breathed
Murmurs of doubt, the weakness of a self
That is not one; denies and yet believes;
Protests with passion, "This is natural," —
Yet owns the other still were truer, better,
Could nature follow it. A self disturbed
By budding growths of reason premature
That breed disease. Spite of defiant rage
Silva half shrank before the steadfast man
Whose life was one compacted whole, a state
Where the rule changed not, and the law was strong.
Then straightway he resented that forced tribute,
Rousing rebellion with intenser will.

But soon this inward strife the slow-paced hours
Slackened; and the soul sank with hunger-pangs,
Hunger of love. Debate was swept right down
By certainty of loss intolerable.

A little loss! only a dark-tressed maid
Who had no heritage save her beauteous being!
But in the candor of her virgin eyes
Saying, I love; and in the mystic charm
Of her dear presence, Silva found a heaven
Where faith and hope were drowned as stars in day.
Fedalma there, each momentary Now
Seemed a whole blest existence, a full cup
That, flowing over, asked no pouring hand
From past to future. All the world was hers.
Splendor was but the herald trumpet note
Of her imperial coming: penury
Vanished before her as before a gem
The pledge of treasuries. Fedalma there,
He thought all loveliness was lovelier,
She crowning it: all goodness credible,
Because of the great trust her goodness bred.
For the strong current of that passionate love
Which urged his life tow'rds hers, like urgent floods
That hurry through the various-mingled earth,
Carried within its stream all qualities
Of what it penetrated, and made love
Only another name, as Silva was,
For the whole man that breathed within his frame.
And she was gone. Well, goddesses will go;
But for a noble there were mortals left
Shaped just like goddesses, — O hateful sweet!
O impudent pleasure that should dare to front
With vulgar visage memories divine!
The noble's birthright of miraculous will
Turning *I would* to *must be*, spurning all
Offered as substitute for what it chose,
Tightened and fixed in strain irrevocable
The passionate selection of that love
Which came not first but as all-conquering last.
Great Love has many attributes, and shrines

For varied worshippers, but his force divine
Shows most its many-named fulness in the man
Whose nature multitudinously mixed,
Each ardent impulse grappling with a thought
Resists all easy gladness, all content
Save mystic rapture, where the questioning soul
Flooded with consciousness of good that is
Finds life one bounteous answer. So it was
In Silva's nature, Love had mastery there,
Not as a holiday ruler, but as one
Who quells a tumult in a day of dread,
A welcomed despot.

Oh, all comforters,
All soothing things that bring mild ecstasy,
Came with her coming, in her presence lived.
Spring afternoons, when delicate shadows fall
Pencilled upon the grass; high summer morns
When white light rains upon the quiet sea
And corn-fields flush with ripeness; odors soft, —
Dumb vagrant bliss that seems to seek a home
And find it deep within 'mid stirrings vague
Of far-off moments when our life was fresh;
All sweetly-tempered music, gentle change
Of sound, form, color, as on wide lagoons
At sunset when from black far-floating prows
Comes a clear wafted song; all exquisite joy
Of a subdued desire, like some strong stream
Made placid in the fulness of a lake, —
All came with her sweet presence, for she brought
The love supreme which gathers to its realm
All powers of loving. Subtle nature's hand
Waked with a touch the intricate harmonies
In her own manifold work. Fedalma there,
Fastidiousness became the prelude fine
For full contentment, and young melancholy,
Lost for its origin, seemed but the pain

Of waiting for that perfect happiness —
The happiness was gone!
He sat alone,
Hating companionship that was not hers;
Felt bruised with hopeless longing; drank, as wine,
Illusions of what had been, would have been;
Weary with anger and a strained resolve,
Sought passive happiness in a waking dream.
It has been so with rulers, emperors,
Nay, sages who held secrets of great Time,
Sharing his hoary and beneficent life, —
Men who sat throned among the multitudes, —
They have sore sickened at the loss of one.
Silva sat lonely in her chamber, leaned
Where she had leaned, to feel the evening breath
Shed from the orange-trees; when suddenly
His grief was echoed in a sad young voice
Far and yet near, brought by aerial wings.

The world is great: the birds all fly from me,
The stars are golden fruit upon a tree
All out of reach: my little sister went,
And I am lonely.

The world is great: I tried to mount the hill
Above the pines, where the light lies so still,
But it rose higher: little Lisa went,
And I am lonely.

The world is great: the wind comes rushing by,
I wonder where it comes from; sea birds cry
And hurt my heart: my little sister went,
And I am lonely.

The world is great: the people laugh and talk,
And make loud holiday: how fast they walk!
I'm lame, they push me: little Lisa went,
And I am lonely.

'T was Pablo, like the wounded spirit of song
Pouring melodious pain to cheat the hour
For idle soldiers in the castle court.
Dreamily Silva heard and hardly felt
The song was outward, rather felt it part
Of his own aching, like the lingering day,
Or slow and mournful cadence of the bell.
But when the voice had ceased, he longed for it,
And fretted at the pause, as memory frets
When words that made its body fall away
And leave it yearning dumbly. Silva then
Bethought him whence the voice came, framed perforce
Some outward image of a life not his
That made a sorrowful centre to the world, —
A boy lame, melancholy-eyed, who bore
A viol, — yes, that very child he saw
This morning eating roots by the gateway, — saw
As one fresh-ruined sees and spells a name
And knows not what he does, yet finds it writ
Full in the inner record. Hark, again!
The voice and viol. Silva called his thought
To guide his ear and track the travelling sound.

O bird that used to press
Thy head against my cheek
With touch that seemed to speak
And ask a tender "yes," —
Ay de mi, my bird!

O tender downy breast
And warmly beating heart,
That beating seemed a part
Of me who gave it rest, —
Ay de mi, my bird!

The western court! The singer might be seen
From the upper gallery: quick the Duke was there

Looking upon the court as on a stage.
Men eased of armor, stretched upon the ground,
Gambling by snatches; shepherds from the hills
Who brought their bleating friends for slaughter; grooms
Shouldering loose harness; leather-aproned smiths,
Traders with wares, green-suited serving-men,
Made a round audience; and in their midst
Stood little Pablo, pouring forth his song,
Just as the Duke had pictured. But the song
Was strangely companied by Roldan's play
With the swift-gleaming balls, and now was crushed
By peals of laughter at grave Annibal,
Who carrying stick and purse o'erturned the pence,
Making mistake by rule. Silva had thought
To melt hard bitter grief by fellowship
With the world-sorrow trembling in his ear
In Pablo's voice; had meant to give command
For the boy's presence; but this company,
This mountebank and monkey, must be — stay!
Not be excepted — must be ordered too
Into his private presence; they had brought
Suggestion of a ready shapen tool
To cut a path between his helpless wish
And what it imaged. A ready shapen tool!
A spy, an envoy whom he might despatch
In unsuspected secrecy, to find
The Gypsies' refuge so that none beside
Might learn it. And this juggler could be bribed,
Would have no fear of Moors, — for who would kill
Dancers and monkeys? — could pretend a journey
Back to his home, leaving his boy the while
To please the Duke with song. Without such chance, —
An envoy cheap and secret as a mole
Who could go scathless, come back for his pay
And vanish straight, tied by no neighborhood, —

Without such chance as this poor juggler brought,
Finding Fedalma was betraying her.

Short interval betwixt the thought and deed.
Roldan was called to private audience
With Annibal and Pablo. All the world
(By which I mean the score or two who heard)
Shrugged high their shoulders, and supposed the Duke
Would fain beguile the evening and replace
His lacking happiness, as was the right
Of nobles, who could pay for any cure,
And wore naught broken, save a broken limb.
In truth, at first, the Duke bade Pablo sing,
But, while he sang, called Roldan wide apart,
And told him of a mission secret, brief, —
A quest which well performed might earn much gold,
But, if betrayed, another sort of wages.
Roldan was ready; "wished above all for gold
And never wished to speak; had worked enough
At wagging his old tongue and chiming jokes;
Thought it was others' turn to play the fool.
Give him but pence enough, no rabbit, sirs,
Would eat and stare and be more dumb than he.
Give him his orders."
They were given straight;
Gold for the journey, and to buy a mule
Outside the gates through which he was to pass
Afoot and carelessly. The boy would stay
Within the castle, at the Duke's command,
And must have naught but ignorance to betray
For threats or coaxing. Once the quest performed,
The news delivered with some pledge of truth
Safe to the Duke, the juggler should go forth,
A fortune in his girdle, take his boy
And settle firm as any planted tree

In fair Valencia, never more to roam.
"Good! good! most worthy of a great hidalgo!
And Roldan was the man! But Annibal, —
A monkey like no other, though morose
In private character, yet full of tricks, —
'T were hard to carry him, yet harder still
To leave the boy and him in company
And free to slip away. The boy was wild
And shy as mountain kid; once hid himself
And tried to run away; and Annibal,
Who always took the lad's side (he was small,
And they were nearer of a size, and, sirs,
Your monkey has a spite against us men
For being bigger), — Annibal went too.
Would hardly know himself, were he to lose
Both boy and monkey, — and 't was property,
The trouble he had put in Annibal.
He did n't choose another man should beat
His boy and monkey. If they ran away
Some man would snap them up, and square himself
And say they were his goods, — he 'd taught them. — no!
He Roldan had no mind another man
Should fatten by his monkey, and the boy
Should not be kicked by any pair of sticks
Calling himself a juggler." . . . .
But the Duke,
Tired of that hammering, signed that it should cease;
Bade Roldan quit all fears, — the boy and ape
Should be safe lodged in Abderahman's tower,
In keeping of the great physician there,
The Duke's most special confidant and friend,
One skilled in taming brutes, and always kind.
The Duke himself this eve would see them lodged.
Roldan must go, — spend no more words, — but go.

A room high up in Abderahman's tower,
A window open to the still warm eve,
And the bright disk of royal Jupiter.
Lamps burning low make little atmospheres
Of light amid the dimness; here and there
Show books and phials, stones and instruments.
In carved dark-oaken chair, unpillowed, sleeps
Right in the rays of Jupiter a small man,
In skull-cap bordered close with crisp gray curls,
And loose black gown showing a neck and breast
Protected by a dim-green amulet;
Pale faced, with finest nostril wont to breathe
Ethereal passion in a world of thought;
Eyebrows jet-black and firm, yet delicate;
Beard scant and grizzled; mouth shut firm, with curves
So subtly turned to meanings exquisite,
You seem to read them as you read a word
Full-vowelled, long-descended, pregnant, — rich
With legacies from long, laborious lives.
Close by him, like a genius of sleep,
Purrs the gray cat, bridling, with snowy breast.
A loud knock. "Forward!" in clear vocal ring.
Enter the Duke, Pablo, and Annibal.
Exit the cat, retreating toward the dark.

DON SILVA.

You slept, Sephardo. I am come too soon.

SEPHARDO.

Nay, my lord, it was I who slept too long.
I go to court among the stars to-night,
So bathed my soul beforehand in deep sleep.
But who are these?

DON SILVA.

Small guests, for whom I ask
Your hospitality. Their owner comes

Some short time hence to claim them. I am pledged
To keep them safely; so I bring them you,
Trusting your friendship for small animals.

SEPHARDO.

Yea, am not I too a small animal?

DON SILVA.

I shall be much beholden to your love
If you will be their guardian. I can trust
No other man so well as you. The boy
Will please you with his singing, touches too
The viol wondrously.

SEPHARDO.

They are welcome both.
Their names are?

DON SILVA.

Pablo, this — this Annibal,
And yet, I hope, no warrior.

SEPHARDO.

We 'll make peace.
Come, Pablo, let us loosen our friend's chain.
Deign you, my lord, to sit. Here, Pablo, thou —
Close to my chair. Now Annibal shall choose.

[The cautious monkey, in a Moorish dress,
A tunic white, turban and scymitar,
Wears these stage garments, nay, his very flesh
With silent protest; keeps a neutral air
As aiming at a metaphysic state
Twixt "is" and "is not"; lets his chain be loosed
By sage Sephardo's hands, sits still at first,
Then trembles out of his neutrality,

Looks up and leaps into Sephardo's lap,
And chatters forth his agitated soul,
Turning to peep at Pablo on the floor.]

SEPHARDO.

See, he declares we are at amity!

DON SILVA.

No brother sage had read your nature faster.

SEPHARDO.

Why, so he *is* a brother sage. Man thinks
Brutes have no wisdom, since they know not his:
Can we divine their world? — the hidden life
That mirrors us as hideous shapeless power,
Cruel supremacy of sharp-edged death,
Or fate that leaves a bleeding mother robbed?
Oh, they have long tradition and swift speech,
Can tell with touches and sharp darting cries
Whole histories of timid races taught
To breathe in terror by red-handed man.

DON SILVA.

Ah, you denounce my sport with hawk and hound.
I would not have the angel Gabriel
As hard as you in noting down my sins.

SEPHARDO.

Nay, they are virtues for you warriors, —
Hawking and hunting! You are merciful
When you leave killing men to kill the brutes.
But, for the point of wisdom, I would choose
To know the mind that stirs between the wings
Of bees and building wasps, or fills the woods
With myriad murmurs of responsive sense

And true-aimed impulse, rather than to know
The thoughts of warriors.

DON SILVA.

Yet they are warriors too, —
Your animals. Your judgment limps, Sephardo:
Death is the king of this world; 't is his park
Where he breeds life to feed him. Cries of pain
Are music for his banquet; and the masque, —
The last grand masque for his diversion, is
The Holy Inquisition.

SEPHARDO.

Ay, anon
I may chime in with you. But not the less
My judgment has firm feet. Though death were king,
And cruelty his right-hand minister,
Pity insurgent in some human breasts
Makes spiritual empire, reigns supreme
As persecuted faith in faithful hearts.
Your small physician, weighing ninety pounds,
A petty morsel for a healthy shark,
Will worship mercy throned within his soul
Though all the luminous angels of the stars
Burst into cruel chorus on his ear,
Singing, "We know no mercy." He would cry
"I know it" still, and soothe the frightened bird
And feed the child a-hungered, walk abreast
Of persecuted men, and keep most hate
For rational torturers. There I stand firm.
But you are bitter, and my speech rolls on
Out of your note.

DON SILVA.

No, no, I follow you.
I too have that within which I will worship

In spite of — yes, Sephardo, I am bitter.
I need your counsel, foresight, all your aid.
Lay these small guests to bed, then we will talk.

SEPHARDO.

See, they are sleeping now. The boy has made
My leg his pillow. For my brother sage,
He 'll never heed us; he knit long ago
A sound ape-system, wherein men are brutes
Emitting doubtful noises. Pray, my lord,
Unlade what burdens you: my ear and hand
Are servants of a heart much bound to you.

DON SILVA.

Yes, yours is love that roots in gifts bestowed
By you on others, and will thrive the more
The more it gives. I have a double want:
First a confessor, — not a Catholic;
A heart without a livery, — naked manhood.

SEPHARDO.

My lord, I will be frank, there 's no such thing
As naked manhood. If the stars look down
On any mortal of our shape, whose strength
Is to judge all things without preference,
He is a monster, not a faithful man.
While my heart beats, it shall wear livery, —
My people's livery, whose yellow badge
Marks them for Christian scorn. I will not say
Man is first man to me, then Jew or Gentile:
That suits the rich *marranos;* but to me
My father is first father and then man.
So much for frankness' sake. But let that pass.
'T is true at least, I am no Catholic,
But Salomo Sephardo, a born Jew,
Willing to serve Don Silva.

DON SILVA.

Oft you sing
Another strain, and melt distinctions down
As no more real than the wall of dark
Seen by small fishes' eyes, that pierce a span
In the wide ocean. Now you league yourself
To hem me, hold me prisoner in bonds
Made, say you, — how? — by God or Demiurge,
By spirit or flesh, — I care not! Love was made
Stronger than bonds, and where they press must break
them.
I came to you that I might breathe at large,
And now you stifle me with talk of birth,
Of race and livery. Yet you knew Fedalma.
She was your friend, Sephardo. And you know
She is gone from me, — know the hounds are loosed
To dog me if I seek her.

SEPHARDO.

Yes, I know.
Forgive me that I used untimely speech,
Pressing a bruise. I loved her well, my lord:
A woman mixed of such fine elements
That were all virtue and religion dead
She 'd make them newly, being what she was.

DON SILVA.

Was? say not *was*, Sephardo! She still lives, —
Is, and is mine; and I will not renounce
What heaven, nay, what she gave me. I will sin,
If sin I must, to win my life again.
The fault lie with those powers who have embroiled
The world in hopeless conflict, where all truth
Fights manacled with falsehood, and all good
Makes but one palpitating life with evil.

(DON SILVA *pauses.* SEPHARDO *is silent.*)

Sephardo, speak! am I not justified?
You taught my mind to use the wing that soars
Above the petty fences of the herd:
Now, when I need your doctrine, you are dumb.

SEPHARDO.

Patience! Hidalgos want interpreters
Of untold dreams and riddles; they insist
On dateless horoscopes, on formulas
To raise a possible spirit, nowhere named.
Science must be their wishing cap; the stars
Speak plainer for high largesse. No, my lord!
I cannot counsel you to unknown deeds.
Thus much I can divine: you wish to find
Her whom you love, — to make a secret search.

DON SILVA.

That is begun already: a messenger
Unknown to all has been despatched this night.
But forecast must be used, a plan devised,
Ready for service when my scout returns,
Bringing the invisible thread to guide my steps
Toward that lost self my life is aching with.
Sephardo, I will go: and I must go
Unseen by all save you; though, at our need,
We may trust Alvar.

SEPHARDO.

A grave task, my lord.
Have you a shapen purpose, or mere will
That sees the end alone and not the means?
Resolve will melt no rocks.

DON SILVA.

But it can scale them.
This fortress has two private issues: one,

Which served the Gypsies' flight, to me is closed:
Our bands must watch the outlet, now betrayed
To cunning enemies. Remains one other,
Known to no man save me: a secret left
As heirloom in our house: a secret safe
Even from him, — from Father Isidor.
'T is he who forces me to use it, — he:
All 's virtue that cheats bloodhounds. Hear, Sephardo.
Given, my scout returns and brings me news
I can straight act on, I shall want your aid.
The issue lies below this tower, your fastness,
Where, by my charter, you rule absolute.
I shall feign illness; you with mystic air
Must speak of treatment asking vigilance
(Nay I *am* ill, — my life has half ebbed out).
I shall be whimsical, devolve command
On Don Diego, speak of poisoning,
Insist on being lodged within this tower,
And rid myself of tendance save from you
And perhaps from Alvar. So I shall escape
Unseen by spies, shall win the days I need
To ransom her and have her safe enshrined.
No matter, were my flight disclosed at last:
I shall come back as from a duel fought
Which no man can undo. Now you know all.
Say, can I count on you?

SEPHARDO.

For faithfulness
In aught that I may promise — yes, my lord.
But, — for a pledge of faithfulness, — this warning.
I will betray naught for your personal harm:
I love you. But note this, — I am a Jew;
And while the Christian persecutes my race,
I 'll turn at need even the Christian's trust

Into a weapon and a shield for Jews.
Shall Cruelty crowned — wielding the savage force
Of multitudes, and calling savageness God
Who gives it victory — upbraid deceit
And ask for faithfulness? I love you well.
You are my friend. But yet you are a Christian,
Whose birth has bound you to the Catholic kings.
There may come moments when to share my joy
Would make you traitor, when to share your grief
Would make me other than a Jew . . . .

DON SILVA.

What need
To urge that now, Sephardo? I am one
Of many Spanish nobles who detest
The roaring bigotry of the herd, would fain
Dash from the lips of king and queen the cup
Filled with besotting venom, half infused
By avarice and half by priests. And now, —
Now when the cruelty you flout me with
Pierces me too in the apple of my eye,
Now when my kinship scorches me like hate
Flashed from a mother's eye, you choose this time
To talk of birth as of inherited rage
Deep-down, volcanic, fatal, bursting forth
From under hard-taught reason? Wondrous friendship!
My uncle Isidor's echo, mocking me,
From the opposing quarter of the heavens,
With iteration of the thing I know,
That I 'm a Christian knight and Spanish noble!
The consequence? Why, that I know. It lies
In my own hands and not on raven tongues.
The knight and noble shall not wear the chain
Of false-linked thoughts in brains of other men.
What question was there 'twixt us two, of aught

That makes division? When I come to you
I come for other doctrine than the Prior's.

SEPHARDO.

My lord, you are o'erwrought by pain. My words,
That carried innocent meaning, do but float
Like little emptied cups upon the flood
Your mind brings with it. I but answered you
With regular proviso, such as stands
In testaments and charters, to forefend
A possible case which none deem likelihood;
Just turned my sleeve, and pointed to the brand
Of brotherhood that limits every pledge.
Superfluous nicety, — the student's trick,
Who will not drink until he can define
What water is and is not. But enough.
My will to serve you now knows no division
Save the alternate beat of love and fear.
There 's danger in this quest, — name, honor, life, —
My lord, the stake is great, and are you sure . . . .

DON SILVA.

No, I am sure of naught but this, Sephardo,
That I will go. Prudence is but conceit
Hoodwinked by ignorance. There 's naught exists
That is not dangerous and holds not death
For souls or bodies. Prudence turns its helm
To flee the storm and lands 'mid pestilence.
Wisdom must end by throwing dice with folly
But for dire passion which alone makes choice.
And I have chosen as the lion robbed
Chooses to turn upon the ravisher.
If love were slack, the Prior's imperious will
Would move it to outmatch him. But, Sephardo,
Were all else mute, all passive as sea-calms,

My soul is one great hunger, — I must see her.
Now you are smiling. Oh, you merciful men
Pick up coarse griefs and fling them in the face
Of us whom life with long descent has trained
To subtler pains, mocking your ready balms.
You smile at my soul's hunger.

SEPHARDO.

Science smiles
And sways our lips in spite of us, my lord,
When thought weds fact, — when maiden prophecy
Waiting, believing, sees the bridal torch.
I use not vulgar measures for your grief,
My pity keeps no cruel feasts; but thought
Has joys apart, even in blackest woe,
And seizing some fine thread of verity
Knows momentary godhead.

DON SILVA.

And your thought?

SEPHARDO.

Seized on the close agreement of your words
With what is written in your horoscope.

DON SILVA.

Reach it me now.

SEPHARDO.

By your leave, Annibal.

(*He places* ANNIBAL *on* PABLO'S *lap and rises. The boy moves without waking, and his head falls on the opposite side.* SEPHARDO *fetches a cushion and lays* PABLO'S *head gently down upon it, then goes to reach the parchment from a cabinet.* ANNIBAL, *having waked up in alarm, shuts his eyes quickly again and pretends to sleep.*)

DON SILVA.

I wish, by new appliance of your skill,
Reading afresh the records of the sky,
You could detect more special augury.
Such chance oft happens, for all characters
Must shrink or widen, as our wine-skins do,
For more or less that we can pour in them;
And added years give ever a new key
To fixed prediction.

SEPHARDO (*returning with the parchment and reseating himself*).

True; our growing thought
Makes growing revelation. But demand not
Specific augury, as of sure success
In meditated projects, or of ends
To be foreknown by peeping in God's scroll.
I say — nay, Ptolemy said it, but wise books
For half the truths they hold are honored tombs —
Prediction is contingent, of effects
Where causes and concomitants are mixed
To seeming wealth of possibilities
Beyond our reckoning. Who will pretend
To tell the adventures of each single fish
Within the Syrian Sea? Show me a fish,
I 'll weigh him, tell his kind, what he devoured,
What would have devoured *him*, — but for one Blas
Who netted him instead; nay, could I tell
That had Blas missed him, he would not have died
Of poisonous mud, and so made carrion,
Swept off at last by some sea-scavenger?

DON SILVA.

Ay, now you talk of fishes, you get hard.
I note you merciful men: you can endure
Torture of fishes and hidalgos. Follows?

SEPHARDO.

By how much, then, the fortunes of a man
Are made of elements refined and mixed
Beyond a tunny's, what our science tells
Of the stars' influence hath contingency
In special issues. Thus, the loadstone draws,
Acts like a will to make the iron submiss;
But garlic rubbing it, that chief effect
Lies in suspense; the iron keeps at large,
And garlic is controller of the stone.
And so, my lord, your horoscope declares
Naught absolutely of your sequent lot,
But, by our lore's authentic rules, sets forth
What gifts, what dispositions, likelihoods,
The aspects of the heavens conspired to fuse
With your incorporate soul. Aught more than this
Is vulgar doctrine. For the ambient,
Though a cause regnant, is not absolute,
But suffers a determining restraint
From action of the subject qualities
In proximate motion.

DON SILVA.

Yet you smiled just now
At some close fitting of my horoscope
With present fact, — with this resolve of mine
To quit the fortress?

SEPHARDO.

Nay, not so, I smiled,
Observing how the temper of your soul
Sealed long tradition of the influence shed
By the heavenly spheres. Here is your horoscope
The aspects of the moon with Mars conjunct,
Of Venus and the Sun with Saturn, lord

Of the ascendant, make symbolic speech
Whereto your words gave running paraphrase.

DON SILVA (*impatiently*).

What did I say ?

SEPHARDO.

You spoke as oft you did
When I was schooling you at Córdova,
And lessons on the noun and verb were drowned
With sudden stream of general debate
On things and actions. Always in that stream
I saw the play of babbling currents, saw
A nature o'er-endowed with opposites
Making a self alternate, where each hour
Was critic of the last, each mood too strong
For tolerance of its fellow in close yoke.
The ardent planets stationed as supreme,
Potent in action, suffer light malign
From luminaries large and coldly bright
Inspiring meditative doubt, which straight
Doubts of itself, by interposing act
Of Jupiter in the fourth house fortified
With power ancestral. So, my lord, I read
The changeless in the changing; so I read
The constant action of celestial powers
Mixed into waywardness of mortal men,
Whereof no sage's eye can trace the course
And see the close.

DON SILVA.

Fruitful result, O sage !
Certain uncertainty.

SEPHARDO.

Yea, a result
Fruitful as seeded earth, where certainty
Would be as barren as a globe of gold.

I love you, and would serve you well, my lord.
Your rashness vindicates itself too much,
Puts harness on of cobweb theory
While rushing like a cataract. Be warned.
Resolve with you is a fire-breathing steed,
But it sees visions, and may feel the air
Impassable with thoughts that come too late,
Rising from out the grave of murdered honor.
Look at your image in your horoscope:

(*Laying the horoscope before* SILVA.)

You are so mixed, my lord, that each to-day
May seem a maniac to its morrow.

DON SILVA (*pushing away the horoscope, rising and turning to look out at the open window*).

No!
No morrow e'er will say that I am mad
Not to renounce her. Risks! I know them all.
I've dogged each lurking, ambushed consequence.
I've handled every chance to know its shape
As blind men handle bolts. Oh, I'm too sane!
I see the Prior's nets. He does my deed;
For he has narrowed all my life to this, —
That I must find her by some hidden means.

(*He turns and stands close in front of* SEPHARDO.)

One word, Sephardo, — leave that horoscope,
Which is but iteration of myself,
And give me promise. Shall I count on you
To act upon my signal? Kings of Spain
Like me have found their refuge in a Jew,
And trusted in his counsel. You will help me?

SEPHARDO.

Yes, my lord, I will help you. Israel
Is to the nations as the body's heart:

Thus saith the Book of Light: and I will act
So that no man may ever say through me
"Your Israel is naught," and make my deeds
The mud they fling upon my brethren.
I will not fail you, save, — you know the terms:
I am a Jew, and not that infamous life
That takes on bastardy, will know no father,
So shrouds itself in the pale abstract, Man.
You should be sacrificed to Israel
If Israel needed it.

DON SILVA.

I fear not that.
I am no friend of fines and banishment,
Or flames that, fed on heretics, still gape,
And must have heretics made to feed them still.
I take your terms, and, for the rest, your love
Will not forsake me.

SEPHARDO.

'T is hard Roman love,
That looks away and stretches forth the sword
Bared for its master's breast to run upon.
But you will have it so. Love shall obey.

(SILVA *turns to the window again, and is silent for a few moments, looking at the sky.*)

DON SILVA.

See now, Sephardo, you would keep no faith
To smooth the path of cruelty. Confess,
The deed I would not do, save for the strait
Another brings me to (quit my command,
Resign it for brief space, I mean no more), —
Were that deed branded, then the brand should fix
On him who urged me.

SEPHARDO.

Will it, though, my lord?

DON SILVA.

I speak not of the fact, but of the right.

SEPHARDO.

My lord, you said but now you were resolved.
Question not if the world will be unjust
Branding your deed. If conscience has two courts
With differing verdicts, where shall lie the appeal?
Our law must be without us or within.
The Highest speaks through all our people's voice,
Custom, tradition, and old sanctities;
Or he reveals himself by new decrees
Of inward certitude.

DON SILVA.

My love for her
Makes highest law, must be the voice of God.

SEPHARDO.

I thought, but now, you seemed to make excuse,
And plead as in some court where Spanish knights
Are tried by other laws than those of love.

DON SILVA.

'T was momentary. I shall dare it all.
How the great planet glows, and looks at me,
And seems to pierce me with his effluence!
Were he a living God, these rays that stir
In me the pulse of wonder were in him
Fulness of knowledge. Are you certified,
Sephardo, that the astral science shrinks
To such pale ashes, dead symbolic forms
For that congenital mixture of effects
Which life declares without the aid of lore?

If there are times propitious or malign
To our first framing, then must all events
Have favoring periods: you cull your plants
By signal of the heavens, then why not trace
As others would by astrologic rule
Times of good augury for momentous acts, —
As secret journeys?

SEPHARDO.

O my lord, the stars
Act not as witchcraft or as muttered spells.
I said before they are not absolute,
And tell no fortunes. I adhere alone
To such tradition of their agencies
As reason fortifies.

DON SILVA.

A barren science!
Some argue now 't is folly. 'T were as well
Be of their mind. If those bright stars had will, —
But they are fatal fires, and know no love.
Of old, I think, the world was happier
With many gods, who held a struggling life
As mortals do, and helped men in the straits
Of forced misdoing. I doubt that horoscope.

(DON SILVA *turns from the window and re-seats himself opposite* SEPHARDO.)

I am most self-contained, and strong to bear.
No man save you has seen my trembling lip
Uttering her name, since she was lost to me.
I 'll face the progeny of all my deeds.

SEPHARDO.

May they be fair! No horoscope makes slaves.
'T is but a mirror, shows one image forth,
And leaves the future dark with endless "ifs."

DON SILVA.

I marvel, my Sephardo, you can pinch
With confident selection these few grains,
And call them verity, from out the dust
Of crumbling error. Surely such thought creeps,
With insect exploration of the world.
Were I a Hebrew, now, I would be bold.
Why should you fear, not being Catholic?

SEPHARDO.

Lo! you yourself, my lord, mix subtleties
With gross belief; by momentary lapse
Conceive, with all the vulgar, that we Jews
Must hold ourselves God's outlaws, and defy
All good with blasphemy, because we hold
Your good is evil; think we must turn pale
To see our portraits painted in your hell,
And sin the more for knowing we are lost.

DON SILVA.

Read not my words with malice. I but meant,
My temper hates an over-cautious march.

SEPHARDO.

The Unnamable made not the search for truth
To suit hidalgos' temper. I abide
By that wise spirit of listening reverence
Which marks the boldest doctors of our race.
For truth, to us, is like a living child
Born of two parents: if the parents part
And will divide the child, how shall it live?
Or, I will rather say: Two angels guide
The path of man, both aged and yet young,
As angels are, ripening through endless years.
On one he leans: some call her Memory,
And some, Tradition; and her voice is sweet,

With deep mysterious accords: the other,
Floating above, holds down a lamp which streams
A light divine and searching on the earth,
Compelling eyes and footsteps. Memory yields,
Yet clings with loving check, and shines anew
Reflecting all the rays of that bright lamp
Our angel Reason holds. We had not walked
But for Tradition; we walk evermore
To higher paths, by brightening Reason's lamp.
Still we are purblind, tottering. I hold less
Than Aben-Ezra, of that aged lore
Brought by long centuries from Chaldæan plains;
The Jew-taught Florentine rejects it all.
For still the light is measured by the eye,
And the weak organ fails. I may see ill;
But over all belief is faithfulness,
Which fulfils vision with obedience.
So, I must grasp my morsels: truth is oft
Scattered in fragments round a stately pile
Built half of error; and the eye's defect
May breed too much denial. But, my lord,
I weary your sick soul. Go now with me
Into the turret. We will watch the spheres,
And see the constellations bend and plunge
Into a depth of being where our eyes
Hold them no more. We 'll quit ourselves and be
The red Aldebaran or bright Sirius,
And sail as in a solemn voyage, bound
On some great quest we know not.

DON SILVA.

Let us go.
She may be watching too, and thought of her
Sways me, as if she knew, to every act
Of pure allegiance.

SEPHARDO.

That is love's perfection, —
Tuning the soul to all her harmonies
So that no chord can jar. Now we will mount.

(*Exeunt.*)

A large hall in the Castle, of Moorish architecture. On the side where the windows are, an outer gallery. Pages and other young gentlemen attached to DON SILVA'S *household, gathered chiefly at one end of the hall. Some are moving about; others are lounging on the carved benches; others, half stretched on pieces of matting and carpet, are gambling.* ARIAS, *a stripling of fifteen, sings by snatches in a boyish treble, as he walks up and down, and tosses back the nuts which another youth flings towards him. In the middle* DON AMADOR, *a gaunt, gray-haired soldier, in a handsome uniform, sits in a marble red-cushioned chair, with a large book spread out on his knees, from which he is reading aloud, while his voice is half drowned by the talk that is going on around him, first one voice and then another surging above the hum.*

ARIAS (*singing*).

There was a holy hermit
Who counted all things loss
For Christ his Master's glory:
He made an ivory cross,
And as he knelt before it
And wept his murdered Lord,
The ivory turned to iron,
The cross became a sword.

José (*from the floor*).

I say, twenty cruzados! thy Galician wit
Can never count.

Hernando (*also from the floor*).

And thy Sevillian wit always counts double.

Arias (*singing*).

The tears that fell upon it,
They turned to red, red rust,
The tears that fell from off it
Made writing in the dust.
The holy hermit, gazing,
Saw words upon the ground:
"The sword be red forever
With the blood of false Mahound."

Don Amador (*looking up from his book, and raising his voice*).

What, gentlemen! Our glorious Lady defend us!

Enriquez (*from the benches*).

Serves the infidels right! They have sold Christians enough to people half the towns in Paradise. If the Queen, now, had divided the pretty damsels of Malaga among the Castilians who have been helping in the holy war, and not sent half of them to Naples ....

Arias (*singing again*).

At the battle of Clavijo
In the days of King Ramiro,
Help us, Allah! cried the Moslem,
Cried the Spaniard, Heaven's chosen,
God and Santiago!

FABIAN.

Oh, the very tail of our chance has vanished. The royal army is breaking up, — going home for the winter. The Grand Master sticks to his own border.

ARIAS (*singing*).

Straight out-flushing like the rainbow,
See him come, celestial Baron,
Mounted knight, with red-crossed banner,
Plunging earthward to the battle,
Glorious Santiago!

HURTADO.

Yes, yes, through the pass of By-and-by you go to the valley of Never. We might have done a great feat, if the Marquis of Cadiz . . . .

ARIAS (*sings*).

As the flame before the swift wind,
See, he fires us, we burn with him!
Flash our swords, dash Pagans backward, —
Victory he! pale fear is allah!
God with Santiago!

DON AMADOR (*raising his voice to a cry*).

Sangre de Dios, gentlemen!

(*He shuts the book, and lets it fall with a bang on the floor. There is instant silence.*)

To what good end is it that I, who studied at Salamanca, and can write verses agreeable to the glorious Lady with the point of a sword which hath done harder service, am reading aloud in a clerkly manner from a book which hath been culled from the flowers of all books, to instruct you in the knowledge befitting those

who would be knights and worthy hidalgos. I had as lief be reading in a belfry. And gambling too! As if it were a time when we needed not the help of God and the saints! Surely for the space of one hour ye might subdue your tongues to your ears that so your tongues might learn somewhat of civility and modesty. Wherefore am I master of the Duke's retinue, if my voice is to run along like a gutter in a storm?

HURTADO (*lifting up the book, and respectfully presenting it to* DON AMADOR).

Pardon, Don Amador! The air is so commoved by your voice, that it stirs our tongues in spite of us.

DON AMADOR (*reopening the book*).

Confess, now, it is a goose-headed trick, that when rational sounds are made for your edification, you find naught in it but an occasion for purposeless gabble. I will report it to the Duke, and the reading-time shall be doubled, and my office of reader shall be handed over to Fray Domingo.

(*While* DON AMADOR *has been speaking,* DON SILVA, *with* DON ALVAR, *has appeared walking in the outer gallery on which the windows are opened.*)

ALL (*in concert*).

No, no, no.

DON AMADOR.

Are ye ready, then, to listen, if I finish the wholesome extract from the Seven Parts, wherein the wise King Alfonso hath set down the reason why knights should be of gentle birth? Will ye now be silent?

ALL.

Yes, silent.

DON AMADOR.

But when I pause, and look up, I give any leave to speak, if he hath aught pertinent to say.

(*Reads.*)

"And this nobility cometh in three ways: *first*, by lineage; *secondly*, by science; and *thirdly*, by valor and worthy behavior. Now, although they who gain nobility through science or good deeds are rightfully called noble and gentle; nevertheless, they are with the highest fitness so called who are noble by ancient lineage, and lead a worthy life as by inheritance from afar; and hence are more bound and constrained to act well, and guard themselves from error and wrong-doing; for in their case it is more true that by evil-doing they bring injury and shame not only on themselves, but also on those from whom they are derived."

(DON AMADOR *places his forefinger for a mark on the page, and looks up, while he keeps his voice raised, as wishing* DON SILVA *to overhear him in the judicious discharge of his function.*)

Hear ye that, young gentlemen? See ye not that if ye have but bad manners even, they disgrace you more than gross misdoings disgrace the low-born? Think you, Arias, it becomes the son of your house irreverently to sing and fling nuts, to the interruption of your elders?

ARIAS (*sitting on the floor and leaning backward on his elbows*).

Nay, Don Amador; King Alfonso, they say, was a heretic, and I think that is not true writing. For noble birth gives us more leave to do ill if we like.

DON AMADOR (*lifting his brows*).

What bold and blasphemous talk is this?

ARIAS.

Why, nobles are only punished now and then, in a grand way, and have their heads cut off, like the Grand Constable. I should n't mind that.

JOSÉ.

Nonsense, Arias! nobles have their heads cut off because their crimes are noble. If they did what was unknightly, they would come to shame. Is n't that true, Don Amador?

DON AMADOR.

Arias is a contumacious puppy, who will bring dishonor on his parentage. Pray, sirrah, whom did you ever hear speak as you have spoken?

ARIAS.

Nay, I speak out of my own head. I shall go and ask the Duke.

HURTADO.

Now, now! you are too bold, Arias.

ARIAS.

Oh, he is never angry with me (*dropping his voice*), because the lady Fedalma liked me. She said I was a good boy, and pretty, and that is what you are not, Hurtado.

HURTADO.

Girl-face! See, now, if you dare ask the Duke.

(DON SILVA *is just entering the hall from the gallery, with* ALVAR *behind him, intending to pass out at the other end. All rise with homage.* DON SILVA *bows coldly and abstractedly.* ARIAS *advances from the group, and goes up to* DON SILVA.)

ARIAS.

My lord, is it true that a noble is more dishonored than other men if he does aught dishonorable?

DON SILVA (*first blushing deeply, and grasping his sword, then raising his hand and giving Arias a blow on the ear*).

Varlet!

ARIAS.

My lord, I am a gentleman.

(DON SILVA *pushes him away, and passes on hurriedly.*)

DON ALVAR (*following and turning to speak*).

Go, go! you should not speak to the Duke when you are not called upon. He is ill and much distempered.

(ARIAS *retires, flushed, with tears in his eyes. His companions look too much surprised to triumph.* DON AMADOR *remains silent and confused.*)

The Plaça Santiago during busy market time. Mules and asses laden with fruits and vegetables. Stalls and booths filled with wares of all sorts. A crowd of buyers and sellers. A stalwart woman with keen eyes, leaning over the panniers of a mule laden with apples, watches LORENZO, *who is lounging through the market. As he approaches her, he is met by* BLASCO.

LORENZO.

Well met, friend.

BLASCO.

Ay, for we are soon to part,
And I would see you at the hostelry,
To take my reckoning. I go forth to-day.

LORENZO.

'T is grievous parting with good company.
I would I had the gold to pay such guests
For all my pleasure in their talk.

BLASCO.

Why, yes;
A solid-headed man of Aragon
Has matter in him that you Southerners lack.
You like my company, — 't is natural.
But, look you, I have done my business well,
Have sold and ta'en commissions. I come straight
From — you know who — I like not naming him.
I 'm a thick man: you reach not my backbone
With any toothpick. But I tell you this:
He reached it with his eye, right to the marrow!
It gave me heart that I had plate to sell,
For, saint or no saint, a good silversmith
Is wanted for God's service; and my plate —
He judged it well — bought nobly.

LORENZO.

A great man.
And holy!

BLASCO.

Yes, I 'm glad I leave to-day.
For there are stories give a sort of smell, —
One's nose has fancies. A good trader, sir,
Likes not this plague of lapsing in the air,
Most ught by men with funds. And they *do* say
There 's a great terror here in Moors and Jews,
I would say, Christians of unhappy blood.
'T is monstrous, sure, that men of substance lapse,
And risk their property. I know I 'm sound.
No heresy was ever bait to me. Whate'er
Is the right faith, that I believe, — naught else.

LORENZO.

Ay, truly, for the flavor of true faith
Once known must sure be sweetest to the taste.
But an uneasy mood is now abroad
Within the town; partly, for that the Duke
Being sorely sick, has yielded the command
To Don Diego, a most valiant man,
More Catholic than the Holy Father's self,
Half chiding God that he will tolerate
A Jew or Arab; though 't is plain they 're made
For profit of good Christians. And weak heads —
Panic will knit all disconnected facts —
Draw hence belief in evil auguries,
Rumors of accusation and arrest,
All air-begotten. Sir, you need not go.
But if it must be so, I 'll follow you
In fifteen minutes, — finish marketing,
Then be at home to speed you on your way.

BLASCO.

Do so. I 'll back to Saragossa straight.
The court and nobles are retiring now
And wending northward. There 'll be fresh demand
For bells and images against the Spring,
When doubtless our great Catholic sovereigns
Will move to conquest of these eastern parts,
And cleanse Granada from the infidel.
Stay, sir, with God until we meet again!

LORENZO.

Go, sir, with God, until I follow you!

(*Exit* BLASCO. LORENZO *passes on towards the market-woman, who, as he approaches, raises herself from her leaning attitude.*)

LORENZO.

Good day, my mistress. How 's your merchandise?
Fit for a host to buy? Your apples now,
They have fair cheeks; how are they at the core?

MARKET-WOMAN.

Good, good, sir! Taste and try. See, here is one
Weighs a man's head. The best are bound with tow:
They 're worth the pains, to keep the peel from splits.

(*She takes out an apple bound with tow, and, as she puts it into* LORENZO'S *hand, speaks in a lower tone.*)

'T is called the Miracle. You open it,
And find it full of speech.

LORENZO.

Ay, give it me,
I 'll take it to the Doctor in the tower.
He feeds on fruit, and if he likes the sort
I 'll buy them for him. Meanwhile, drive your ass
Round to my hostelry. I 'll straight be there.
You 'll not refuse some barter?

MARKET-WOMAN.

No, not I.
Feathers and skins.

LORENZO.

Good, till we meet again.

(LORENZO, *after smelling at the apple, puts it into a pouch-like basket which hangs before him, and walks away. The woman drives off the mule.*)

A LETTER.

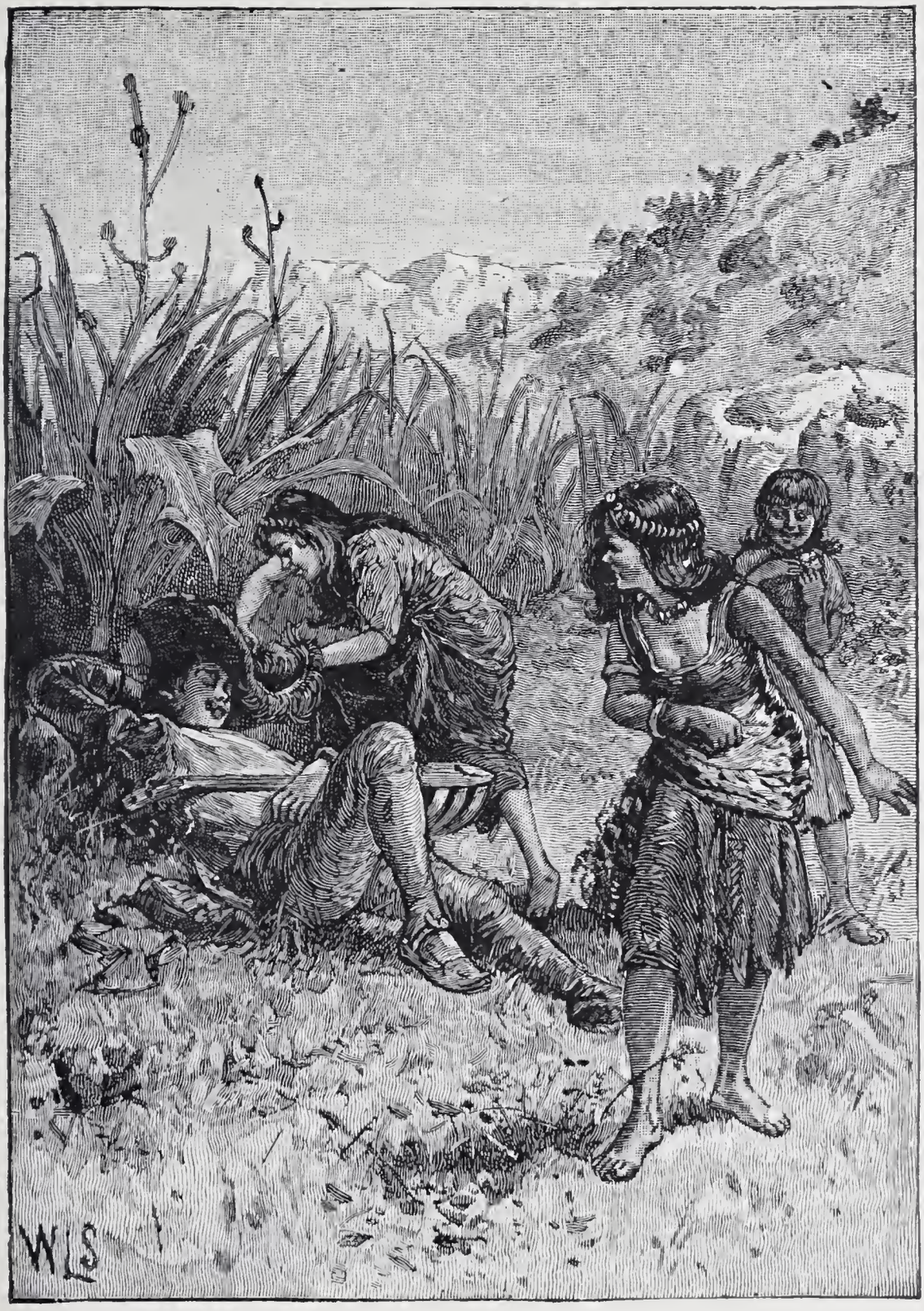
"Zarca, the chief of the Zincali, greets
The King El Zagal. Let the force be sent

With utmost swiftness to the Pass of Luz.
A good five hundred added to my bands
Will master all the garrison : the town
Is half with us, and will not lift an arm
Save on our side. My scouts have found a way
Where once we thought the fortress most secure :
Spying a man upon the height, they traced,
By keen conjecture piecing broken sight,
His downward path, and found its issue. There
A file of us can mount, surprise the fort
And give the signal to our friends within
To ope the gates for our confederate bands,
Who will lie eastward ambushed by the rocks,
Waiting the night. Enough ; give me command,
Bedmár is yours. Chief Zarca will redeem
His pledge of highest service to the Moor :
Let the Moor, too, be faithful and repay
The Gypsy with the furtherance he needs
To lead his people over Bahr el Scham
And plant them on the shore of Africa.
So may the King El Zagal live as one
Who, trusting Allah will be true to him,
Maketh himself as Allah true to friends."

BOOK III.

QUIT now the town, and with a journeying dream
Swift as the wings of sound yet seeming slow
Through multitudinous compression of stored sense
And spiritual space, see walls and towers
Lie in the silent whiteness of a trance,
Giving no sign of that warm life within
That moves and murmurs through their hidden heart.
Pass o'er the mountain, wind in sombre shade,
Then wind into the light and see the town
Shrunk to white crust upon the darken rock.
Turn east and south, descend, then rise anew
'Mid smaller mountains ebbing towards the plain:
Scent the fresh breath of the height-loving herbs
That, trodden by the pretty parted hoofs
Of nimble goats, sigh at the innocent bruise,
And with a mingled difference exquisite
Pour a sweet burden on the buoyant air.
Pause now and be all ear. Far from the south,
Seeking the listening silence of the heights,
Comes a slow-dying sound, — the Moslems' call
To prayer in afternoon. Bright in the sun
Like tall white sails on a green shadowy sea
Stand Moorish watch-towers: 'neath that eastern sky
Couches unseen the strength of Moorish Baza:
Where the meridian bends lies Guadix, hold
Of brave El Zagal. This is Moorish land,
Where Allah lives unconquered in dark breasts
And blesses still the many-nourishing earth
With dark-armed industry. See from the steep
The scattered olives hurry in gray throngs
Down towards the valley, where the little stream

Parts a green hollow 'twixt the gentler slopes;
And in that hollow, dwellings: not white homes
Of building Moors, but little swarthy tents
Such as of old perhaps on Asian plains,
Or wending westward past the Caucasus,
Our fathers raised to rest in. Close they swarm
About two taller tents, and viewed afar
Might seem a dark-robed crowd in penitence
That silent kneel; but come now in their midst
And watch a busy, bright-eyed, sportive life!
Tall maidens bend to feed the tethered goat,
The ragged kirtle fringing at the knee
Above the living curves, the shoulder's smoothness
Parting the torrent strong of ebon hair.
Women with babes, the wild and neutral glance
Swayed now to sweet desire of mothers' eyes,
Rock their strong cradling arms and chant low strains
Taught by monotonous and soothing winds
That fall at night-time on the dozing ear.
The crones plait reeds, or shred the vivid herbs
Into the caldron: tiny urchins crawl
Or sit and gurgle forth their infant joy.
Lads lying sphinx-like with uplifted breast
Propped on their elbows, their black manes tossed back,
Fling up the coin and watch its fatal fall,
Dispute and scramble, run and wrestle fierce,
Then fall to play and fellowship again;
Or in a thieving swarm they run to plague
The grandsires, who return with rabbits slung,
And with the mules fruit-laden from the fields.
Some striplings choose the smooth stones from the brook
To serve the slingers, cut the twigs for snares,
Or trim the hazel-wands, or at the bark
Of some exploring dog they dart away
With swift precision towards a moving speck.



"His doublet loose, his right arm backward flung.
His left caressing close the long-necked lute."

These are the brood of Zarca's Gypsy tribe;
Most like an earth-born race bred by the Sun
On some rich tropic soil, the father's light
Flashing in coal black eyes, the mother's blood
With bounteous elements feeding their young limbs.
The stalwart men and youths are at the wars
Following their chief, all save a trusty band
Who keep strict watch along the northern heights.

But see, upon a pleasant spot removed
From the camp's hubbub, where the thicket strong
Of huge-eared cactus makes a bordering curve
And casts a shadow, lies a sleeping man
With Spanish hat screening his upturned face,
His doublet loose, his right arm backward flung,
His left caressing close the long-necked lute
That seems to sleep too, leaning tow'rds its lord.
He draws deep breath secure but not unwatched.
Moving a-tiptoe, silent as the elves,
As mischievous too, trip three barefooted girls
Not opened yet to womanhood, — dark flowers
In slim long buds: some paces farther off
Gathers a little white-teethed shaggy group,
A grinning chorus to the merry play.
The tripping girls have robbed the sleeping man
Of all his ornaments. Hita is decked
With an embroidered scarf across her rags;
Tralla, with thorns for pins, sticks two rosettes
Upon her threadbare woollen; Hinda now,
Prettiest and boldest, tucks her kirtle up
As wallet for the stolen buttons, — then
Bends with her knife to cut from off the hat
The aigrette and the feather; deftly cuts,
Yet wakes the sleeper, who with sudden start
Shakes off the masking hat and shows the face

Of Juan: Hinda swift as thought leaps back,
But carries off the feather and aigrette,
And leads the chorus of a happy laugh,
Running with all the naked-footed imps,
Till with safe survey all can face about
And watch for signs of stimulating chase,
While Hinda ties long grass around her brow
To stick the feather in with majesty.
Juan still sits contemplative, with looks
Alternate at the spoilers and their work.

JUAN.

Ah, you marauding kite, — my feather gone!
My belt, my scarf, my buttons and rosettes!
This is to be a brother of Zincali!
The fiery-blooded children of the Sun, —
So says chief Zarca, — children of the Sun!
Ay, ay, the black and stinging flies he breeds
To plague the decent body of mankind.
Orpheus, professor of the *gai saber*,
Made all the brutes polite, they say, by dint of song.
Pregnant, — but as a guide in daily life
Delusive. For if song and music cure
The barbarous trick of thieving, 't is a cure
That works as slowly as old Doctor Time
In curing folly. Why, the minxes there
Have rhythm in their toes, and music rings
As readily from them as from little bells
Swung by the breeze. Well, I will try the physic.

(*He touches his lute.*)

Hem! taken rightly, any single thing
The Rabbis say, implies all other things.
A knotty task, though, the unravelling
Meum and *Tuum* from a saraband:
It needs a subtle logic, nay, perhaps

A good large property, to see the thread.

(*He touches the lute again.*)

There 's more of odd than even in this world,
Else pretty sinners would not be let off
Sooner than ugly; for if honeycombs
Are to be got by stealing, they should go
Where life is bitterest on the tongue. And yet, —
Because this minx has pretty ways I wink
At all her tricks, though if a flat-faced lass,
With eyes askew, were half as bold as she,
I should chastise her with a hazel switch.
I 'm a plucked peacock, — even my voice and wit
Without a tail! — why, any fool detects
The absence of your tail, but twenty fools
May not detect the presence of your wit.

(*He touches his lute again.*)

Well, I must coax my tail back cunningly,
For to run after these brown lizards, — ah!
I think the lizards lift their ears at this.

(*As he thrums his lute the lads and girls gradually approach: he touches it more briskly, and* Hinda, *advancing, begins to move arms and legs with an initiatory dancing movement, smiling coaxingly at* Juan. *He suddenly stops, lays down his lute and folds his arms.*)

What, you expected a tune to dance to, eh?

Hinda, Hita, Tralla, and the rest (*clapping their hands*).

Yes, yes, a tune, a tune!

Juan.

But that is what you cannot have, my sweet brothers and sisters. The tunes are all dead, — dead as the tunes of the lark when you have plucked his wings off; dead

as the song of the grasshopper when the ass has swallowed him. I can play and sing no more. Hinda has killed my tunes.

(*All cry out in consternation.* HINDA *gives a wail and tries to examine the lute.* JUAN *waves her off.*)

Understand, Señora Hinda, that the tunes are **in me**; they are not in the lute till I put them there. And if you cross my humor, I shall be as tuneless as a bag of wool. If the tunes are to be brought to life again, I must have my feather back.

(HINDA *kisses his hands and feet coaxingly.*)

No, no! not a note will come for coaxing. The feather, I say, the feather!

(HINDA *sorrowfully takes off the feather, and gives it to* JUAN.)

Ah, now let us see. Perhaps a tune will come.

(*He plays a measure, and the three girls begin to dance; then he suddenly stops.*)

No, the tune will not come: it wants the aigrette (*pointing to it on* HINDA'S *neck*).

(HINDA, *with rather less hesitation, but again sorrowfully, takes off the aigrette, and gives it to him.*)

Ha! (*he plays again, but, after rather a longer time, again stops.*) No, no; 't is the buttons are wanting, Hinda, the buttons. This tune feeds chiefly on buttons, — a hungry tune. It wants one, two, three, four, five, six. Good!

(*After* HINDA *has given up the buttons, and* JUAN *has laid them down one by one, he begins to play again, going on longer than before, so that the dancers become excited by the movement. Then he stops.*)

Ah, Hita, it is the belt, and, Tralla, the rosettes, — both are wanting. I see the tune will not go on without them.

(HITA *and* TRALLA *take off the belt and rosettes, and lay them down quickly, being fired by the dancing, and eager for the music. All the articles lie by* JUAN'S *side on the ground.*)

Good, good, my docile wild-cats! Now I think the tunes are all alive again. Now you may dance and sing too. Hinda, my little screamer, lead off with the song I taught you, and let us see if the tune will go right on from beginning to end.

(*He plays. The dance begins again,* HINDA *singing. All the other boys and girls join in the chorus, and all at last dance wildly.*)

SONG.

All things journey: sun and moon,
Morning, noon, and afternoon,
Night and all her stars:
'Twixt the east and western bars
Round they journey,
Come and go!
We go with them!
For to roam and ever roam
Is the wild Zincali's home.

Earth is good, the hillside breaks
By the ashen roots and makes
Hungry nostrils glad:
Then we run till we are mad,
Like the horses,
And we cry,
None shall catch us!
Swift winds wing us, — we are free, —
Drink the air, — Zincali we!

Falls the snow : the pine-branch split,
Call the fire out, see it flit,
Through the dry leaves run,
Spread and glow, and make a sun
In the dark tent :
O warm dark !
Warm as conies !
Strong fire loves us, we are warm !
Who shall work Zincali harm ?

Onward journey : fires are spent ;
Sunward, sunward ! lift the tent,
Run before the rain,
Through the pass, along the plain.
Hurry, hurry,
Lift us, wind !
Like the horses.
For to roam and ever roam
Is the wild Zincali's home.

(*When the dance is at its height,* HINDA *breaks away from the rest, and dances round* JUAN, *who is now standing. As he turns a little to watch her movement, some of the boys skip towards the feather, aigrette, &c., snatch them up, and run away, swiftly followed by* HITA, TRALLA, *and the rest.* HINDA, *as she turns again, sees them, screams, and falls in her whirling ; but immediately gets up, and rushes after them, still screaming with rage.*)

JUAN.

Santiago ! these imps get bolder. Haha ! Señora Hinda, this finishes your lesson in ethics. You have seen the advantage of giving up stolen goods. Now you see the

ugliness of thieving when practised by others. That fable of mine about the tunes was excellently devised. I feel like an ancient sage instructing our lisping ancestors. My memory will descend as the Orpheus of Gypsies. But I must prepare a rod for those rascals. I'll bastinado them with prickly pears. It seems to me these needles will have a sound moral teaching in them.

(*While* JUAN *takes a knife from his belt, and surveys the prickly pear,* HINDA *returns.*)

JUAN.

Pray, Señora, why do you fume? Did you want to steal my ornaments again yourself?

HINDA (*sobbing*).

No; I thought you would give them me back again.

JUAN.

What, did you want the tunes to die again? Do you like finery better than dancing?

HINDA.

Oh, that was a tale; I shall tell tales too, when I want to get anything I can't steal. And I know what I will do. I shall tell the boys I've found some little foxes, and I will never say where they are till they give me back the feather! (*She runs off again.*)

JUAN.

Hem! the disciple seems to seize the mode sooner than the matter. Teaching virtue with this prickly pear may only teach the youngsters to use a new weapon; as your teaching orthodoxy with fagots may only bring up a fashion of roasting. Dios! my remarks grow too pregnant, — my wits get a plethora by solitary feeding on the produce of my own wisdom.

(*As he puts up his knife again,* HINDA *comes running back, and crying, "Our Queen! our Queen!"* JUAN *adjusts his garments and his lute, while* HINDA *turns to meet* FEDALMA, *who wears a Moorish dress, with gold ornaments, her black hair hanging round her in plaits, a white turban on her head, a dagger by her side. She carries a scarf on her left arm, which she holds up as a shade.*)

FEDALMA (*patting* HINDA'S *head*).

How now, wild one? You are hot and panting. Go to my tent, and help Nouna to plait reeds.

(HINDA *kisses* FEDALMA'S *hand, and runs off.* FEDALMA *advances towards* JUAN, *who kneels to take up the edge of her cymar, and kisses it.*)

JUAN.

How is it with you, lady? You look sad.

FEDALMA.

Oh, I am sick at heart. The eye of day,
The insistent summer sun, seems pitiless,
Shining in all the barren crevices
Of weary life, leaving no shade, no dark,
Where I may dream that hidden waters lie;
As pitiless as to some shipwrecked man,
Who, gazing from his narrow shoal of sand
On the wide unspecked round of blue and blue,
Sees that full light is errorless despair.
The insects' hum that slurs the silent dark
Startles, and seems to cheat me, as the tread
Of coming footsteps cheats the midnight watcher
Who holds her heart and waits to hear them pause,
And hears them never pause, but pass and die.
Music sweeps by me as a messenger

Carrying a message that is not for me.
The very sameness of the hills and sky
Is obduracy, and the lingering hours
Wait round me dumbly, like superfluous slaves,
Of whom I want naught but the secret news
They are forbid to tell. And, Juan, you —
You, too, are cruel — would be over-wise
In judging your friend's needs, and choose to hide
Something I crave to know.

JUAN.

I, lady?

FEDALMA.

You.

JUAN.

I never had the virtue to hide aught,
Save what a man is whipped for publishing.
I 'm no more reticent than the voluble air, —
Dote on disclosure, — never could contain
The latter half of all my sentences,
But for the need to utter the beginning.
My lust to tell is so importunate
That it abridges every other vice,
And makes me temperate for want of time.
I dull sensation in the haste to say
'T is this or that, and choke report with surmise.
Judge, then, dear lady, if I could be mute
When but a glance of yours had bid me speak.

FEDALMA.

Nay, sing such falsities! — you mock me worse
By speech that gravely seems to ask belief.
You are but babbling in a part you play
To please my father. Oh, 't is well meant, say you, —
Pity for woman's weakness. Take my thanks.

JUAN.

Thanks angrily bestowed are red-hot coin
Burning your servant's palm.

FEDALMA.

Deny it not,
You know how many leagues this camp of ours
Lies from Bedmár, — what mountains lie between, —
Could tell me if you would about the Duke, —
That he is comforted, sees how he gains
By losing the Zincala, finds how slight
The thread Fedalma made in that rich web,
A Spanish noble's life. No, that is false!
He never would think lightly of our love.
Some evil has befallen him, — he 's slain, —
Has sought for danger and has beckoned death
Because I made all life seem treachery.
Tell me the worst, — be merciful, — no worst,
Against the hideous painting of my fear,
Would not show like a better.

JUAN.

If I speak,
Will you believe your slave? For truth is scant;
And where the appetite is still to hear
And not believe, falsehood would stint it less.
How say you? Does your hunger's fancy choose
The meagre fact?

FEDALMA (*seating herself on the ground*).

Yes, yes, the truth, dear Juan.
Sit now, and tell me all.

JUAN.

That all is naught.
I can unleash my fancy if you wish
And hunt for phantoms: shoot an airy guess

And bring down airy likelihood, — some lie
Masked cunningly to look like royal truth
And cheat the shooter, while King Fact goes free,
Or else some image of reality
That doubt will handle and reject as false.
Ask for conjecture, — I can thread the sky
Like any swallow, but, if you insist,
On knowledge that would guide a pair of feet
Right to Bedmár, across the Moorish bounds,
A mule that dreams of stumbling over stones
Is better stored.

FEDALMA.

And you have gathered naught
About the border wars? No news, no hint
Of any rumors that concern the Duke, —
Rumors kept from me by my father?

JUAN.

None.
Your father trusts no secrets to the echoes.
Of late his movements have been hid from all
Save those few hundred picked Zincali breasts
He carries with him. Think you he 's a man
To let his projects slip from out his belt,
Then whisper him who haps to find them strayed
To be so kind as keep his counsel well?
Why, if he found me knowing aught too much,
He would straight gag or strangle me, and say,
"Poor hound! it was a pity that his bark
Could chance to mar my plans: he loved my daughter, —
The idle hound had naught to do but love,
So followed to the battle and got crushed."

FEDALMA (*holding out her hand, which* JUAN *kisses*).

Good Juan, I could have no nobler friend.
You 'd ope your veins and let your life-blood out

To save another's pain, yet hide the deed
With jesting, — say, 't was merest accident,
A sportive scratch that went by chance too deep, —
And die content with men's slight thought of you,
Finding your glory in another's joy.

JUAN.

Dub not my likings virtues, lest they get
A drug-like taste, and breed a nausea.
Honey 's not sweet, commended as cathartic.
Such names are parchment labels upon gems
Hiding their color. What is lovely seen
Priced in a tariff ? — lapis lazuli,
Such bulk, so many drachmas : amethysts
Quoted at so much ; sapphires higher still.
The stone like solid heaven in its blueness
Is what I care for, not its name or price.
So, if I live or die to serve my friend,
'T is for my love, — 't is for my friend alone,
And not for any rate that friendship bears
In heaven or on earth. Nay, I romance, —
I talk of Roland and the ancient peers.
In me 't is hardly friendship, only lack
Of a substantial self that holds a weight ;
So I kiss larger things and roll with them.

FEDALMA.

Nay, you will never hide your soul from me ;
I 've seen the jewel's flash, and know 't is there,
Muffle it as you will. That foam-like talk
Will not wash out a fear which blots the good
Your presence brings me. Oft I 'm pierced afresh
Through all the pressure of my selfish griefs
By thought of you. It was a rash resolve
Made you disclose yourself when you kept watch

About the terrace wall: — your pity leaped
Seeing my ills alone and not your loss,
Self-doomed to exile. Juan, you must repent.
'T is not in nature that resolve, which feeds
On strenuous actions, should not pine and die
In these long days of empty listlessness.

JUAN.

Repent? Not I. Repentance is the weight
Of indigested meals eat yesterday.
'T is for large animals that gorge on prey,
Not for a honey-sipping butterfly.
I am a thing of rhythm and redondillas, —
The momentary rainbow on the spray
Made by the thundering torrent of men's lives:
No matter whether I am here or there;
I still catch sunbeams. And in Africa,
Where melons and all fruits, they say, grow large,
Fables are real, and the apes polite,
A poet, too, may prosper past belief:
I shall grow epic, like the Florentine,
And sing the founding of our infant state,
Sing the Zincalo's Carthage.

FEDALMA.

Africa!
Would we were there! Under another heaven,
In lands where neither love nor memory
Can plant a selfish hope, — in lands so far
I should not seem to see the outstretched arms
That seek me, or to hear the voice that calls.
I should feel distance only and despair;
So rest forever from the thought of bliss,
And wear my weight of life's great chain unstruggling
Juan, if I could know he would forget, —

Nay, not forget, forgive me, — be content
That I forsook him for no joy, but sorrow;
For sorrow chosen rather than a joy
That destiny made base! Then he would taste
No bitterness in sweet, sad memory,
And I should live unblemished in his thought,
Hallowed like her who dies an unwed bride.
Our words have wings, but fly not where we would.
Could mine but reach him, Juan!

JUAN.

Speak but the wish, —
My feet have wings, — I 'll be your Mercury.
I fear no shadowed perils by the way.
No man will wear the sharpness of his sword
On me. Nay, I 'm a herald of the Muse,
Sacred for Moors and Spaniards. I will go, —
Will fetch you tidings for an amulet.
But stretch not hope too strongly towards that mark
As issue of my wandering. Given, I cross
Safely the Moorish border, reach Bedmár:
Fresh counsels may prevail there, and the Duke
Being absent in the field, I may be trapped.
Men who are sour at missing larger game
May wing a chattering sparrow for revenge.
It is a chance no further worth the note
Than as a warning, lest you feared worse ill
If my return were stayed. I might be caged;
They would not harm me else. Untimely death,
The red auxiliary of the skeleton,
Has too much work on hand to think of me;
Or, if he cares to slay me, I shall fall
Choked with a grape-stone for economy.
The likelier chance is that I go and come,
Bringing you comfort back.

FEDALMA (*starts from her seat and walks to a little distance, standing a few moments with her back towards* JUAN, *then she turns round quickly, and goes towards him*).

No, Juan, no!
Those yearning words come from a soul infirm,
Crying and struggling at the pain of bonds
Which yet it would not loosen. He knows all, —
All that he needs to know: I said farewell:
I stepped across the cracking earth and knew
'T would yawn behind me. I must walk right on.
No, Juan, I will win naught by risking you:
The possible loss would poison hope. Besides,
'T were treachery in me: my father wills
That we — all here — should rest within this camp.
If I can never live, like him, on faith
In glorious morrows, I am resolute.
While he treads painfully with stillest step
And beady brow, pressed 'neath the weight of arms,
Shall I, to ease my fevered restlessness,
Raise peevish moans, shattering that fragile silence?
No! On the close-thronged spaces of the earth
A battle rages: Fate has carried me
'Mid the thick arrows: I will keep my stand, —
Not shrink and let the shaft pass by my breast
To pierce another. Oh, 't is written large
The thing I have to do. But you, dear Juan,
Renounce, endure, are brave, unurged by aught
Save the sweet overflow of your good will.

(*She seats herself again.*)

JUAN.

Nay, I endure naught worse than napping sheep,
When nimble birds uproot a fleecy lock
To line their nest with. See! your bondsman, Queen,

The minstrel of your court, is featherless;
Deforms your presence by a moulting garb;
Shows like a roadside bush culled of its buds.
Yet, if your graciousness will not disdain
A poor plucked songster, — shall he sing to you?
Some lay of afternoons, — some ballad strain
Of those who ached once but are sleeping now
Under the sun-warmed flowers? 'T will cheat the time.

FEDALMA.

Thanks, Juan, later, when this hour is passed.
My soul is clogged with self; it could not float
On with the pleasing sadness of your song.
Leave me in this green spot, but come again, —
Come with the lengthening shadows.

JUAN.

Then your slave
Will go to chase the robbers. Queen, farewell!

FEDALMA.

Best friend, my well-spring in the wilderness!

[While Juan sped along the stream, there came
From the dark tents a ringing joyous shout
That thrilled Fedalma with a summons grave
Yet welcome too. Straightway she rose and stood,
All languor banished, with a soul suspense,
Like one who waits high presence, listening.
Was it a message, or her father's self
That made the camp so glad?
It was himself!
She saw him now advancing, girt with arms
That seemed like idle trophies hung for show
Beside the weight and fire of living strength
That made his frame. He glanced with absent triumph,
As one who conquers in some field afar

And bears off unseen spoil. But nearing her,
His terrible eyes intense sent forth new rays, —
A sudden sunshine where the lightning was
'Twixt meeting dark. All tenderly he laid
His hand upon her shoulder; tenderly,
His kiss upon her brow.]

ZARCA.

My royal daughter!

FEDALMA.

Father, I joy to see your safe return.

ZARCA.

Nay, I but stole the time, as hungry men
Steal from the morrow's meal, made a forced march,
Left Hassan as my watch-dog, all to see
My daughter, and to feed her famished hope
With news of promise.

FEDALMA.

Is the task achieved
That was to be the herald of our flight?

ZARCA.

Not outwardly, but to my inward vision
Things are achieved when they are well begun.
The perfect archer calls the deer his own
While yet the shaft is whistling. His keen eye
Never sees failure, sees the mark alone.
You have heard naught, then, — had no messenger?

FEDALMA.

I, father? no: each quiet day has fled
Like the same moth, returning with slow wing,
And pausing in the sunshine.

ZARCA.

It is well.
You shall not long count days in weariness.

Ere the full moon has waned again to new,
We shall reach Almería: Berber ships
Will take us for their freight, and we shall go
With plenteous spoil, not stolen, bravely won
By service done on Spaniards. Do you shrink?
Are you aught less than a Zincala?

FEDALMA.

No;
But I am more. The Spaniards fostered me.

ZARCA.

They stole you first, and reared you for the flames.
I found you, rescued you, that you might live
A true Zincala's life; else you were doomed.
Your bridal bed had been the rack.

FEDALMA (*in a low tone*).

They meant —
To seize me? — ere he came?

ZARCA.

Yes, I know all.
They found your chamber empty.

FEDALMA (*eagerly*).

Then you know, —
(*Checking herself.*)
Father, my soul would be less laggard, fed
With fuller trust.

ZARCA.

My daughter, I must keep
The Arab's secret. Arabs are our friends,
Grappling for life with Christians who lay waste
Granada's valleys, and with devilish hoofs
Trample the young green corn, with devilish play
Fell blossomed trees, and tear up well-pruned vines:
Cruel as tigers to the vanquished brave,

They wring out gold by oaths they mean to break;
Take pay for pity and are pitiless;
Then tinkle bells above the desolate earth,
And praise their monstrous gods, supposed to love
The flattery of liars. I will strike
The full-gorged dragon. You, my child, must watch
The battle with a heart, not fluttering
But duteous, firm-weighted by resolve,
Choosing between two lives, like her who holds
A dagger which must pierce one of two breasts,
And one of them her father's. Nay, you divine, –
I speak not closely, but in parables;
Put one for many.

FEDALMA (*collecting herself, and looking firmly at* ZARCA).
Then it is your will
That I ask nothing?

ZARCA.
You shall know enough
To trace the sequence of the seed and flower.
El Zagal trusts me, rates my counsel high:
He, knowing I have won a grant of lands
Within the Berber's realm, wills me to be
The tongue of his good cause in Africa,
So gives us furtherance in our pilgrimage
For service hoped, as well as service done
In that great feat of which I am the eye,
And my three hundred Gypsies the best arm.
More, I am charged by other noble Moors
With messages of weight to Telemsán.
Ha, your eye flashes. Are you glad?

FEDALMA.
Yes, glad
That men are forced to honor a Zincalo.

ZARCA.

Oh fighting for dear life men choose their swords
For cutting only, not for ornament.
What naught but Nature gives, man takes perforce
Where she bestows it, though in vilest place.
Can he compress invention out of pride,
Make heirship do the work of muscle, sail
Towards great discoveries with a pedigree ?
Sick men ask cures, and Nature serves not hers
Daintily as a feast. A blacksmith once
Founded a dynasty and raised on high
The leathern apron over armies spread
Between the mountains like a lake of steel.

FEDALMA (*bitterly*).

To be contemned, then, is fair augury.
That pledge of future good at least is ours.

ZARCA.

Let men contemn us: 't is such blind contempt
That leaves the wingéd broods to thrive in warmth
Unheeded, till they fill the air like storms.
So we shall thrive, — still darkly shall draw force
Into a new and multitudinous life
That likeness fashions to community,
Mother divine of customs, faith, and laws.
'T is ripeness, 't is fame's zenith that kills hope.
Huge oaks are dying, forests yet to come
Lie in the twigs and rotten-seeming seeds.

FEDALMA.

And our Zincali ? Under their poor husk
Do you discern such seed ? You said our band
Was the best arm of some hard enterprise;
They give out sparks of virtue, then, and show
There 's metal in their earth ?

ZARCA.

Ay, metal fine
In my brave Gypsies. Not the lithest Moor
Has lither limbs for scaling, keener eye
To mark the meaning of the farthest speck
That tells of change; and they are disciplined
By faith in me, to such obedience
As needs no spy. My scalers and my scouts
Are to the Moorish force they 're leagued withal
As bow-string to the bow; while I their chief
Command the enterprise and guide the will
Of Moorish captains, as the pilot guides
With eye-instructed hand the passive helm.
For high device is still the highest force,
And he who holds the secret of the wheel
May make the rivers do what work he would.
With thoughts impalpable we clutch men's souls,
Weaken the joints of armies, make them fly
Like dust and leaves before the viewless wind.
Tell me what 's mirrored in the tiger's heart,
I 'll rule that too.

FEDALMA (*wrought to a glow of admiration*).

O my imperial father!
'T is where there breathes a mighty soul like yours
That men's contempt is of good augury.

ZARCA (*seizing both* FEDALMA'S *hands, and looking at her searchingly*).

And you, my daughter, are you not the child
Of the Zincalo? Does not his great hope
Thrill in your veins like shouts of victory?
'T is a vile life that like a garden pool
Lies stagnant in the round of personal loves;
That has no ear save for the tickling lute

Set to small measures, — deaf to all the beats
Of that large music rolling o'er the world:
A miserable, petty, low-roofed life,
That knows the mighty orbits of the skies
Through naught save light or dark in its own cabin.
The very brutes will feel the force of kind
And move together, gathering a new soul, —
The soul of multitudes. Say now, my child,
You will not falter, not look back and long
For unfledged ease in some soft alien nest.
The crane with outspread wing that heads the file
Pauses not, feels no backward impulses:
Behind it summer was, and is no more;
Before it lies the summer it will reach
Or fall in the mid-ocean. And you no less
Must feel the force sublime of growing life.
New thoughts are urgent as the growth of wings;
The widening vision is imperious
As higher members bursting the worm's sheath.
You cannot grovel in the worm's delights:
You must take wingéd pleasures, wingéd pains.
Are you not steadfast? Will you live or die
For aught below your royal heritage?
To him who holds the flickering brief torch
That lights a beacon for the perishing,
Aught else is crime. Are you a false Zincala?

FEDALMA.

Father, my soul is weak, the mist of tears
Still rises to my eyes, and hides the goal
Which to your undimmed sight is clear and changeless.
But if I cannot plant resolve on hope
It will stand firm on certainty of woe.
I choose the ill that is most like to end
With my poor being. Hopes have precarious life.

They are oft blighted, withered, snapped sheer off
In vigorous growth and turned to rottenness.
But faithfulness can feed on suffering,
And knows no disappointment. Trust in me!
If it were needed, this poor trembling hand
Should grasp the torch, — strive not to let it fall
Though it were burning down close to my flesh,
No beacon lighted yet: through the damp dark
I should still hear the cry of gasping swimmers.
Father, I will be true!

ZARCA.

I trust that word.
And, for your sadness, — you are young, — the bruise
Will leave no mark. The worst of misery
Is when a nature framed for noblest things
Condemns itself in youth to petty joys,
And, sore athirst for air, breathes scanty life
Gasping from out the shallows. You are saved
From such poor doubleness. The life we choose
Breathes high, and sees a full-arched firmament.
Our deeds shall speak like rock-hewn messages,
Teaching great purpose to the distant time.
Now I must hasten back. I shall but speak
To Nadar of the order he must keep
In setting watch and victualling. The stars
And the young moon must see me at my post.
Nay, rest you here. Farewell, my younger self, —
Strong-hearted daughter! Shall I live in you
When the earth covers me?

FEDALMA.

My father, death
Should give your will divineness, make it strong
With the beseechings of a mighty soul

That left its work unfinished. Kiss me now:

(*They embrace, and she adds tremulously as they part,*)

And when you see fair hair be pitiful. (*Exit* ZARCA.)

(FEDALMA *seats herself on the bank, leans her head forward, and covers her face with her drapery. While she is seated thus,* HINDA *comes from the bank, with a branch of musk roses in her hand. Seeing* FEDALMA *with head bent and covered, she pauses, and begins to move on tiptoe.*)

HINDA.

Our Queen! Can she be crying? There she sits
As I did every day when my dog Saad
Sickened and yelled, and seemed to yell so loud
After we 'd buried him, I oped his grave.

(*She comes forward on tiptoe, kneels at* FEDALMA'S *feet, and embraces them.* FEDALMA *uncovers her head.*)

FEDALMA.

Hinda! what is it?

HINDA.

Queen, a branch of roses, —
So sweet, you 'll love to smell them. 'T was the last.
I climbed the bank to get it before Tralla,
And slipped and scratched my arm. But I don't mind.
You love the roses, — so do I. I wish
The sky would rain down roses, as they rain
From off the shaken bush. Why will it not?
Then all the valley would be pink and white
And soft to tread on. They would fall as light
As feathers, smelling sweet; and it would be
Like sleeping and yet waking, all at once!
Over the sea, Queen, where we soon shall go,
Will it rain roses?

FEDALMA.

No, my prattler, no!
It never will rain roses: when we want
To have more roses we must plant more trees.
But you want nothing, little one, — the world
Just suits you as it suits the tawny squirrels.
Come, you want nothing.

HINDA.

Yes, I want more berries, —
Red ones, — to wind about my neck and arms
When I am married, — on my ankles too
I want to wind red berries, and on my head.

FEDALMA.

Who is it you are fond of? Tell me, now.

HINDA.

O Queen, you know! It could be no one else
But Ismaël. He catches birds, — no end!
Knows where the speckled fish are, scales the rocks,
And sings and dances with me when I like.
How should I marry and not marry him?

FEDALMA.

Should you have loved him, had he been a Moor,
Or white Castilian?

HINDA (*starting to her feet, then kneeling again*).

Are you angry, Queen?
Say why you will think shame of your poor Hinda?
She 'd sooner be a rat and hang on thorns
To parch until the wind had scattered her,
Than be an outcast, spit at by her tribe.

FEDALMA.

Hinda, I know you are a good Zincala.
But would you part from Ismaël? leave him now

If your chief bade you, — said it was for good
To all your tribe that you must part from him?

HINDA (*giving a sharp cry*).

Ah, will he say so?

FEDALMA (*almost fierce in her earnestness*).

Nay, child, answer me.
Could you leave Ismaël? get into a boat
And see the waters widen 'twixt you two
Till all was water and you saw him not,
And knew that you would never see him more?
If 't was your chief's command, and if he said
Your tribe would all be slaughtered, die of plague,
Of famine, — madly drink each other's blood . . . .

HINDA (*trembling*).

O Queen, if it is so, tell Ismaël.

FEDALMA.

You would obey, then? part from him forever?

HINDA.

How could we live else? With our brethren lost? —
No marriage feast? The day would turn to dark.
Zincali cannot live without their tribe.
I must obey! Poor Ismaël — poor Hinda!
But will it ever be so cold and dark?
Oh, I would sit upon the rocks and cry,
And cry so long that I could cry no more:
Then I should go to sleep.

FEDALMA.

No, Hinda, no!
Thou never shalt be called to part from him.
I will have berries for thee, red and black,

And I will be so glad to see thee glad,
That earth will seem to hold enough of joy
To outweigh all the pangs of those who part.
Be comforted, bright eyes. See, I will tie
These roses in a crown, for thee to wear.

HINDA (*clapping her hands, while* FEDALMA *puts the roses on her head*).

Oh, I 'm as glad as many little foxes, —
I will find Ismaël, and tell him all. (*She runs off.*)

FEDALMA (*alone*).

She has the strength I lack. Within her world
The dial has not stirred since first she woke:
No changing light has made the shadows die,
And taught her trusting soul sad difference.
For her, good, right, and law are all summed up
In what is possible; life is one web
Where love, joy, kindred, and obedience
Lie fast and even, in one warp and woof
With thirst and drinking, hunger, food, and sleep.
She knows no struggles, sees no double path:
Her fate is freedom, for her will is one
With the Zincalo's law, the only law
She ever knew. For me — oh, I have fire within,
But on my will there falls the chilling snow
Of thoughts that come as subtly as soft flakes,
Yet press at last with hard and icy weight.
I could be firm, could give myself the wrench
And walk erect, hiding my life-long wound,
If I but saw the fruit of all my pain
With that strong vision which commands the soul,
And makes great awe the monarch of desire.
But now I totter, seeing no far goal:
I tread the rocky pass, and pause and grasp,

Guided by flashes. When my father comes,
And breathes into my soul his generous hope, —
By his own greatness making life seem great,
As the clear heavens bring sublimity,
And show earth larger, spanned by that blue vast, —
Resolve is strong: I can embrace my sorrow,
Nor nicely weigh the fruit; possessed with need
Solely to do the noblest, though it failed, —
Though lava streamed upon my breathing deed
And buried it in night and barrenness.
But soon the glow dies out, the warrior's music
That vibrated as strength through all my limbs
Is heard no longer; over the wide scene
There 's naught but chill gray silence, or the hum
And fitful discord of a vulgar world.
Then I sink helpless, — sink into the arms
Of all sweet memories, and dream of bliss:
See looks that penetrate like tones; hear tones
That flash looks with them. Even now I feel
Soft airs enwrap me, as if yearning rays
Of some far presence touched me with their warmth
And brought a tender murmuring. . . . .

[While she mused,
A figure came from out the olive-trees
That bent close-whispering 'twixt the parted hills
Beyond the crescent of thick cactus: paused
At sight of her; then slowly forward moved
With careful step, and gently said, "Fedalma!"
Fearing lest fancy had enslaved her sense,
She quivered, rose, but turned not. Soon again:
"Fedalma, it is Silva!" Then she turned.
He, with bared head and arms entreating, beamed
Like morning on her. Vision held her still
One moment, then with gliding motion swift,

Inevitable as the melting stream's,
She found her rest within his circling arms.

FEDALMA.

O love, you are living, and believe in me!

DON SILVA.

Once more we are together. Wishing dies, —
Stifled with bliss.

FEDALMA.

You did not hate me, then, —
Think me an ingrate, — think my love was small
That I forsook you?

DON SILVA.

Dear, I trusted you
As holy men trust God. You could do naught
That was not pure and loving, — though the deed
Might pierce me unto death. You had less trust,
Since you suspected mine. 'T was wicked doubt.

FEDALMA.

Nay, when I saw you hating me the fault
Seemed in my lot, — the poor Zincala's, — her
On whom you lavished all your wealth of love
As price of naught but sorrow. Then I said,
"'T is better so. He will be happier!"
But soon that thought, struggling to be a hope,
Would end in tears.

DON SILVA.

It was a cruel thought.
Happier! True misery is not begun
Until I cease to love thee.

FEDALMA.

Silva!

DON SILVA.

Mine!

(*They stand a moment or two in silence.*)

FEDALMA.

I thought I had so much to tell you, love, —
Long eloquent stories, — how it all befell, —
The solemn message, calling me away
To awful spousals, where my own dead joy,
A conscious ghost, looked on and saw me wed.

DON SILVA.

Oh that grave speech would cumber our quick souls
Like bells that waste the moments with their loudness.

FEDALMA.

And if it all were said, 't would end in this,
That I still loved you when I fled away.
'T is no more wisdom than the little birds
Make known by their soft twitter when they feel
Each other's heart beat.

DON SILVA.

All the deepest things
We now say with our eyes and meeting pulse:
Our voices need but prattle.

FEDALMA.

I forget
All the drear days of thirst in this one draught.

(*Again they are silent for a few moments.*)

But tell me how you came? Where are your guards?
Is there no risk? And now I look at you,
This garb is strange . . . .

DON SILVA.

I came alone.

FEDALMA.

Alone?

DON SILVA.

Yes, — fled in secret. There was no way else
To find you safely.

FEDALMA (*letting one hand fall and moving a little from him with a look of sudden terror, while he clasps her more firmly by the other arm*).

Silva!

DON SILVA.

It is naught.
Enough that I am here. Now we will cling.
What power shall hinder us? You left me once
To set your father free. That task is done,
And you are mine again. I have braved all
That I might find you, see your father, win
His furtherance in bearing you away
To some safe refuge. Are we not betrothed?

FEDALMA.

Oh I am trembling 'neath the rush of thoughts
That come like griefs at morning, — look at me
With awful faces, from the vanishing haze
That momently had hidden them.

DON SILVA.

What thoughts?

FEDALMA.

Forgotten burials. There lies a grave
Between this visionary present and the past.
Our joy is dead, and only smiles on us
A loving shade from out the place of tombs.

DON SILVA.

Fedalma, your love faints, else aught that parts us
Would seem but superstition. Love supreme
Defies all sophistry, — risks avenging fires.
I have risked all things. But your love is faint.

FEDALMA (*retreating a little, but keeping his hand*).

Silva, if now between us came a sword,
Severed my arm, and left our two hands clasped,
This poor maimed arm would feel the clasp till death.
What parts us is a sword . . . .

(ZARCA *has been advancing in the background. He has drawn his sword, and now thrusts the naked blade between them.* SILVA *lets go* FEDALMA'S *hand, and grasps his sword.* FEDALMA, *startled at first, stands firmly, as if prepared to interpose between her father and the Duke.*)

ZARCA.

Ay, 't is a sword
That parts the Spanish noble and the true Zincala:
A sword that was baptized in Christian blood,
When once a band, cloaking with Spanish law
Their brutal rapine, would have butchered us,
And then outraged our women.

(*Resting the point of his sword on the ground.*)

My lord Duke,
I was a guest within your fortress once
Against my will; had entertainment too, —
Much like a galley slave's. Pray, have you sought
The poor Zincalo's camp, to find return
For that Castilian courtesy? or rather
To make amends for all our prisoned toil
By this great honor of your unasked presence?



"Ay, 't is a sword
That parts the Spanish noble and the true Zincala."

DON SILVA.

Chief, I have brought no scorn to meet your scorn.
I came because love urged me, — that deep love
I bear to her whom you call daughter, — her
Whom I reclaim as my betrothéd bride.

ZARCA.

Doubtless you bring for final argument
Your men-at-arms who will escort your bride?

DON SILVA.

I came alone. The only force I bring
Is tenderness. Nay, I will trust besides
In all the pleadings of a father's care
To wed his daughter as her nurture bids.
And for your tribe, — whatever purposed good
Your thoughts may cherish, I will make secure
With the strong surety of a noble's power:
My wealth shall be your treasury.

ZARCA (*with irony*).

My thanks!
To me you offer liberal price; for her
Your love's beseeching will be force supreme.
She will go with you as a willing slave,
Will give a word of parting to her father,
Wave farewells to her tribe, then turn and say:
"Now, my lord, I am nothing but your bride;
I am quite culled, have neither root nor trunk,
Now wear me with your plume!"

DON SILVA.

Yours is the wrong
Feigning in me one thought of her below
The highest homage. I would make my rank

The pedestal of her worth; a noble's sword,
A noble's honor, her defence; his love
The life-long sanctuary of her womanhood.

ZARCA.

I tell you, were you King of Aragon,
And won my daughter's hand, your higher rank
Would blacken her dishonor. 'T were excuse
If you were beggared, homeless, spit upon,
And so made even with her people's lot;
For then she would be lured by want, not wealth,
To be a wife amongst an alien race
To whom her tribe owes curses.

DON SILVA.

Such blind hate
Is fit for beasts of prey, but not for men.
My hostile acts against you should but count
As ignorant strokes against a friend unknown;
And for the wrongs inflicted on your tribe
By Spanish edicts or the cruelty
Of Spanish vassals, am I criminal?
Love comes to cancel all ancestral hate,
Subdues all heritage, proves that in mankind
Union is deeper than division.

ZARCA.

Ay,
Such love is common: I have seen it oft, —
Seen many women rend the sacred ties
That bind them in high fellowship with men,
Making them mothers of a people's virtue;
Seen them so levelled to a handsome steed
That yesterday was Moorish property,
To-day is Christian, — wears new-fashioned gear,

Neighs to new feeders, and will prance alike
Under all banners, so the banner be
A master's who caresses. Such light change
You call conversion; we Zincali call
Conversion infamy. Our people's faith
Is faithfulness; not the rote-learned belief
That we are heaven's highest favorites,
But the resolve that, being most forsaken
Among the sons of men, we will be true
Each to the other, and our common lot.
You Christians burn men for their heresy:
Our vilest heretic is that Zincala
Who, choosing ease, forsakes her people's woes.
The dowry of my daughter is to be
Chief woman of her tribe, and rescue it.
A bride with such a dowry has no match
Among the subjects of that Catholic Queen
Who would have Gypsies swept into the sea
Or else would have them gibbeted.

DON SILVA.

And you,
Fedalma's father, — you who claim the dues
Of fatherhood, — will offer up her youth
To mere grim idols of your fantasy!
Worse than all Pagans, with no oracle
To bid you murder, no sure good to win,
Will sacrifice your daughter, — to no god,
But to a hungry fire within your soul,
Mad hopes, blind hate, that like possessing fiends
Shriek at a name! This sweetest virgin, reared
As garden flowers, to give the sordid world
Glimpses of perfectness, you snatch and thrust
On dreary wilds; in visions mad, proclaim
Semiramis of Gypsy wanderers;

Doom, with a broken arrow in her heart,
To wait for death 'mid squalid savages:
For what? You would be savior of your tribe:
So said Fedalma's letter; rather say,
You have the will to save by ruling men,
But first to rule; and with that flinty will
You cut your way, though the first cut you give
Gash your child's bosom.

(*While* SILVA *has been speaking, with growing passion,* FEDALMA *has placed herself between him and her father.*)

ZARCA (*with calm irony*).

You are loud, my lord!
You only are the reasonable man;
You have a heart, I none. Fedalma's good
Is what you see, you care for; while I seek
No good, not even my own, urged on by naught
But hellish hunger, which must still be fed
Though in the feeding it I suffer throes.
Fume at your own opinion as you will:
I speak not now to you, but to my daughter.
If she still calls it good to mate with you,
To be a Spanish duchess, kneel at court,
And hope her beauty is excuse to men
When women whisper, "She was a Zincala;"
If she still calls it good to take a lot
That measures joy for her as she forgets
Her kindred and her kindred's misery,
Nor feels the softness of her downy couch
Marred by remembrance that she once forsook
The place that she was born to, — let her go!
If life for her still lies in alien love,
That forces her to shut her soul from truth
As men in shameful pleasures shut out day;

And death, for her, is to do rarest deeds,
Which, even failing, leave new faith to men,
The faith in human hearts, — then, let her go!
She is my only offspring; in her veins
She bears the blood her tribe has trusted in;
Her heritage is their obedience,
And if I died, she might still lead them forth
To plant the race her lover now reviles
Where they may make a nation, and may rise
To grander manhood than his race can show;
Then live a goddess, sanctifying oaths,
Enforcing right, and ruling consciences,
By law deep-graven in exalting deeds,
Through the long ages of her people's life.
If she can leave that lot for silken shame,
For kisses honeyed by oblivion, —
The bliss of drunkards or the blank of fools, —
Then let her go! You Spanish Catholics,
When you are cruel, base, and treacherous,
For ends not pious, tender gifts to God,
And for men's wounds offer much oil to churches:
We have no altars for such healing gifts
As soothe the heavens for outrage done on earth.
We have no priesthood and no creed to teach
That the Zincala who might save her race
And yet abandons it, may cleanse that blot,
And mend the curse her life has been to men,
By saving her own soul. Her one base choice
Is wrong unchangeable, is poison shed
Where men must drink, shed by her poisoning will.
Now choose, Fedalma!

[But her choice was made.
Slowly, while yet her father spoke, she moved
From where oblique with deprecating arms

She stood between the two who swayed her heart:
Slowly she moved to choose sublimer pain;
Yearning, yet shrinking; wrought upon by awe,
Her own brief life seeming a little isle
Remote through visions of a wider world
With fates close-crowded; firm to slay her joy
That cut her heart with smiles beneath the knife,
Like a sweet babe foredoomed by prophecy.
She stood apart, yet near her father: stood
Hand clutching hand, her limbs all tense with will
That strove against her anguish, eyes that seemed a soul
Yearning in death towards him she loved and left.
He faced her, pale with passion and a will
Fierce to resist whatever might seem strong
And ask him to submit: he saw one end, —
He must be conqueror; monarch of his lot
And not its tributary. But she spoke
Tenderly, pleadingly.]

FEDALMA.

My lord, farewell!
'T was well we met once more; now we must part.
I think we had the chief of all love's joys
Only in knowing that we loved each other.

DON SILVA.

I thought we loved with love that clings till death,
Clings as brute mothers bleeding to their young,
Still sheltering, clutching it, though it were dead;
Taking the death-wound sooner than divide.
I thought we loved so.

FEDALMA.

Silva, it is fate.
Great Fate has made me heiress of this woe.

You must forgive Fedalma all her debt:
She is quite beggared: if she gave herself,
'T would be a self corrupt with stifled thoughts
Of a forsaken better. It is truth
My father speaks: the Spanish noble's wife
Would be a false Zincala. I will bear
The heavy trust of my inheritance.
See, 't was my people's life that throbbed in me,
An unknown need stirred darkly in my soul,
And made me restless even in my bliss.
Oh, all my bliss was in our love; but now
I may not taste it: some deep energy
Compels me to choose hunger. Dear, farewell!
I must go with my people.

[She stretched forth
Her tender hands, that oft had lain in his,
The hands he knew so well, that sight of them
Seemed like their touch. But he stood still as death;
Locked motionless by forces opposite:
His frustrate hopes still battled with despair;
His will was prisoner to the double grasp
Of rage and hesitancy. All the travelled way
Behind him, he had trodden confident,
Ruling munificently in his thought
This Gypsy father. Now the father stood
Present and silent and unchangeable
As a celestial portent. Backward lay
The traversed road, the town's forsaken wall,
The risk, the daring; all around him now
Was obstacle, save where the rising flood
Of love close pressed by anguish of denial
Was sweeping him resistless; save where she
Gazing stretched forth her tender hands, that hurt
Like parting kisses. Then at last he spoke.]

DON SILVA.

No, I can never take those hands in mine,
Then let them go forever!

FEDALMA.

It must be.
We may not make this world a paradise
By walking it together hand in hand,
With eyes that meeting feed a double strength.
We must be only joined by pains divine
Of spirits blent in mutual memories.
Silva, our joy is dead.

DON SILVA.

But love still lives,
And has a safer guard in wretchedness.
Fedalma, women know no perfect love:
Loving the strong, they can forsake the strong;
Man clings because the being whom he loves
Is weak and needs him. I can never turn
And leave you to your difficult wandering;
Know that you tread the desert, bear the storm,
Shed tears, see terrors, faint with weariness,
Yet live away from you. I should feel naught
But your imagined pains: in my own steps
See your feet bleeding, taste your silent tears,
And feel no presence but your loneliness.
No, I will never leave you!

ZARCA.

My lord Duke,
I have been patient, given room for speech,
Bent not to move my daughter by command,
Save that of her own faithfulness. But now,
All further words are idle elegies

Unfitting times of action. You are here
With the safe conduct of that trust you showed
Coming alone to the Zincalo's camp.
I would fain meet all trust with courtesy
As well as honor; but my utmost power
Is to afford you Gypsy guard to-night
Within the tents that keep the northward lines,
And for the morrow, escort on your way
Back to the Moorish bounds.

DON SILVA.

What if my words
Were meant for deeds, decisive as a leap
Into the current? It is not my wont
To utter hollow words, and speak resolves
Like verses banded in a madrigal.
I spoke in action first: I faced all risks
To find Fedalma. Action speaks again
When I, a Spanish noble, here declare
That I abide with her, adopt her lot,
Claiming alone fulfilment of her vows
As my betrothéd wife.

FEDALMA (*wresting herself from him, and standing opposite with a look of terror*).

Nay, Silva, nay!
You could not live so; spring from your high place . . . .

DON SILVA.

Yes, I have said it. And you, chief, are bound
By her strict vows, no stronger fealty
Being left to cancel them.

ZARCA.

Strong words, my lord!
Sounds fatal as the hammer-strokes that shape

The glowing metal: they must shape your life.
That you will claim my daughter is to say
That you will leave your Spanish dignities,
Your home, your wealth, your people, to become
A true Zincalo; share your wanderings,
And be a match meet for my daughter's dower
By living for her tribe; take the deep oath
That binds you to us; rest within our camp,
Nevermore hold command of Spanish men,
And keep my orders. See, my lord, you lock
A many-winding chain, — a heavy chain.

DON SILVA.

I have but one resolve: let the rest follow.
What is my rank? To-morrow it will be filled
By one who eyes it like a carrion bird,
Waiting for death. I shall be no more missed
Than waves are missed that leaping on the rock
Find there a bed and rest. Life 's a vast sea
That does its mighty errand without fail,
Panting in unchanged strength though waves are changing.
And I have said it. She shall be my people,
And where she gives her life I will give mine.
She shall not live alone, nor die alone.
I will elect my deeds, and be the liege,
Not of my birth, but of that good alone
I have discerned and chosen.

ZARCA.

Our poor faith
Allows not rightful choice, save of the right
Our birth has made for us. And you, my lord,
Can still defer your choice, for some days' space.
I march perforce to-night; you, if you will,

Under Zincalo guard, can keep the heights
With silent Time that slowly opes the scroll
Of change inevitable; taking no oath
Till my accomplished task leaves me at large
To see you keep your purpose or renounce it.

DON SILVA.

Chief, do I hear amiss, or does your speech
Ring with a doubleness which I had held
Most alien to you? You would put me off,
And cloak evasion with allowance? No!
We will complete our pledges. I will take
That oath which binds not me alone, but you,
To join my life forever with Fedalma's.

ZARCA.

I wrangle not, — time presses. But the oath
Will leave you that same post upon the heights;
Pledged to remain there while my absence lasts.
You are agreed, my lord?

DON SILVA.

Agreed to all.

ZARCA.

Then I will give the summons to our camp.
We will adopt you as a brother now,
In the Zincalo's fashion. [*Exit* ZARCA.

(SILVA *takes* FEDALMA'S *hands.*)

FEDALMA.

O my lord!
I think the earth is trembling: naught is firm.
Some terror chills me with a shadowy grasp.
Am I about to wake, or do you breathe
Here in this valley? Did the outer air

Vibrate to fatal words, or did they shake
Only my dreaming soul? You a Zincalo?

DON SILVA.

Is then your love too faint to raise belief
Up to that height?

FEDALMA.

Silva, had you but said
That you would die, — that were an easy task
For you who oft have fronted death in war.
But so to live for me, — you, used to rule, —
You could not breathe the air my father breathes
His presence is subjection. Go, my lord!
Fly, while there yet is time. Wait not to speak.
I will declare that I refused your love, —
Would keep no vows to you ....

DON SILVA.

It is too late.
You shall not thrust me back to seek a good
Apart from you. And what good? Why, to face
Your absence, — all the want that drove me forth
To work the will of a more tyrannous friend
Than any uncowled father. Life at least
Gives choice of ills; forces me to defy,
But shall not force me to a weak defiance.
The power that threatened you, to master me,
That scorches like a cave-hid dragon's breath,
Sure of its victory in spite of hate,
Is what I last will bend to, — most defy.
Your father has a chieftain's ends, befitting
A soldier's eye and arm: were he as strong
As the Moors' prophet, yet the prophet too
Had younger captains of illustrious fame
Among the infidels. Let him command,

For when your father speaks, I shall hear you.
Life were no gain if you were lost to me:
I would straight go and seek the Moorish walls,
Challenge their bravest, and embrace swift death.
The Glorious Mother and her pitying Son
Are not Inquisitors, else their heaven were hell.
Perhaps they hate their cruel worshippers,
And let them feed on lies. I 'll rather trust
They love you and have sent me to defend you.

FEDALMA.

I made my creed so, just to suit my mood
And smooth all hardship, till my father came
And taught my soul by ruling it. Since then
I cannot weave a dreaming happy creed
Where our love's happiness is not accursed.
My father shook my soul awake. And you, —
What the Zincala may not quit for you,
I cannot joy that you should quit for her.

DON SILVA.

Oh, Spanish men are not a petty band
Where one deserter makes a fatal breach.
Men, even nobles, are more plenteous
Than steeds and armor; and my weapons left
Will find new hands to wield them. Arrogance
Makes itself champion of mankind, and holds
God's purpose maimed for one hidalgo lost.
See where your father comes and brings a crowd
Of witnesses to hear my oath of love;
The low red sun glows on them like a fire;
This seems a valley in some strange new world,
Where we have found each other, my Fedalma.

BOOK IV.

NOW twice the day had sunk from off the hills
While Silva kept his watch there, with the band
Of strong Zincali. When the sun was high
He slept, then, waking, strained impatient eyes
To catch the promise of some moving form
That might be Juan, — Juan who went and came
To soothe two hearts, and claimed naught for his own:
Friend more divine than all divinities,
Quenching his human thirst in others' joy.
All through the lingering nights and pale chill dawns
Juan had hovered near; with delicate sense,
As of some breath from every changing mood,
Had spoken or kept silence; touched his lute
To hint of melody, or poured brief strains
That seemed to make all sorrows natural,
Hardly worth weeping for, since life was short,
And shared by loving souls. Such pity welled
Within the minstrel's heart of light-tongued Juan
For this doomed man, who with dream-shrouded eyes
Had stepped into a torrent as a brook,
Thinking to ford it and return at will,
And now waked helpless in the eddying flood,
Hemmed by its raging hurry. Once that thought,
How easy wandering is, how hard and strict
The homeward way, had slipped from reverie
Into low-murmured song; — (brief Spanish song
'Scaped him as sighs escape from other men.)

Push off the boat,
Quit, quit the shore,
The stars will guide us back:—
O gathering cloud,
O wide, wide sea,
O waves that keep no track!

On through the pines!
The pillared woods,
Where silence breathes sweet breath:—
O labyrinth,
O sunless gloom,
The other side of death!

Such plaintive song had seemed to please the Duke,—
Had seemed to melt all voices of reproach
To sympathetic sadness; but his moods
Had grown more fitful with the growing hours,
And this soft murmur had the iterant voice
Of heartless Echo, whom no pain can move
To say aught else than we have said to her.
He spoke, impatient: "Juan, cease thy song.
Our whimpering poesy and small-paced tunes
Have no more utterance than the cricket's chirp
For souls that carry heaven and hell within."
Then Juan, lightly: "True, my lord, I chirp
For lack of soul; some hungry poets chirp
For lack of bread. 'T were wiser to sit down
And count the star-seed, till I fell asleep
With the cheap wine of pure stupidity."
And Silva, checked by courtesy: "Nay, Juan,
Were speech once good, thy song were best of speech.
I meant, all life is but poor mockery:
Action, place, power, the visible wide world
Are tattered masquerading of this self,

This pulse of conscious mystery: all change,
Whether to high or low, is change of rags.
But for her love, I would not take a good
Save to burn out in battle, in a flame
Of madness that would feel no mangled limbs,
And die not knowing death, but passing straight —
Well, well, to other flames — in purgatory."
Keen Juan's ear caught the self-discontent
That vibrated beneath the changing tones
Of life-contemning scorn. Gently he said:
"But *with* her love, my lord, the world deserves
A higher rate; were it but masquerade,
The rags were surely worth the wearing?" "Yes.
No misery shall force me to repent
That I have loved her."
So with wilful talk,
Fencing the wounded soul from beating winds
Of truth that came unasked, companionship
Made the hours lighter. And the Gypsy guard,
Trusting familiar Juan, were content,
At friendly hint from him, to still their songs
And busy jargon round the nightly fires.
Such sounds the quick-conceiving poet knew
Would strike on Silva's agitated soul
Like mocking repetition of the oath
That bound him in strange clanship with the tribe
Of human panthers, flame-eyed, lithe-limbed, fierce,
Unrecking of time-woven subtleties
And high tribunals of a phantom-world.

But the third day, though Silva southward gazed
Till all the shadows slanted towards him, gazed
Till all the shadows died, no Juan came.
Now in his stead came loneliness, and thought
Inexorable, fastening with firm chain

What is to what hath been. Now awful Night,
Ancestral mystery of mysteries, came down
Past all the generations of the stars,
And visited his soul with touch more close
Than when he kept that younger, briefer watch
Under the church's roof beside his arms,
And won his knighthood.
Well, this solitude,
This company with the enduring universe,
Whose mighty silence carrying all the past
Absorbs our history as with a breath,
Should give him more assurance, make him strong
In all contempt of that poor circumstance
Called human life, — customs and bonds and laws
Wherewith men make a better or a worse,
Like children playing on a barren mound
Feigning a thing to strive for or avoid.
Thus Silva urged, answering his many-voiced self,
Whose hungry needs, like petulant multitudes,
Lured from the home that nurtured them to strength,
Made loud insurgence. Thus he called on Thought,
On dexterous Thought, with its swift alchemy
To change all forms, dissolve all prejudice
Of man's long heritage, and yield him up
A crude fused world to fashion as he would.
Thought played him double; seemed to wear the yoke
Of sovereign passion in the noonday height
Of passion's prevalence; but served anon
As tribune to the larger soul which brought
Loud-mingled cries from every human need
That ages had instructed into life.
He could not grasp Night's black blank mystery
And wear it for a spiritual garb
Creed-proof: he shuddered at its passionless touch.
On solitary souls, the universe

Looks down inhospitable; the human heart
Finds nowhere shelter but in human kind.
He yearned towards images that had breath in them,
That sprang warm palpitant with memories
From streets and altars, from ancestral homes,
Banners and trophies and the cherishing rays
Of shame and honor in the eyes of man.
These made the speech articulate of his soul,
That could not move to utterance of scorn
Save in words bred by fellowship; could not feel
Resolve of hardest constancy to love,
The firmer for the sorrows of the loved,
Save by concurrent energies high-wrought
To sensibilities transcending sense
Through closest citizenship, and long-shared pains
Of far-off laboring ancestors. In vain
He sought the outlaw's strength, and made a right
Contemning that hereditary right
Which held dim habitations in his frame,
Mysterious haunts of echoes old and far,
The voice divine of human loyalty.
At home, among his people, he had played
In sceptic ease with saints and images
And thunders of the Church that deadened fell
Through screens of priests plethoric. Awe, unscathed
By deeper trespass, slept without a dream.
But for such trespass as made outcasts, still
The ancient Furies lived with faces new
And lurked with lighter slumber than of old
O'er Catholic Spain, the land of sacred oaths
That might be broken.

Now the former life
Of close-linked fellowship, the life that made
His full-formed self, as the impregnant sap
Of years successive frames the full-branched tree, —

Was present in one whole; and that great trust
His deed had broken turned reproach on him
From faces of all witnesses who heard
His uttered pledges; saw him hold high place
Centring reliance; use rich privilege
That bound him like a victim-nourished god
By tacit covenant to shield and bless;
Assume the Cross and take his knightly oath
Mature, deliberate: faces human all,
And some divine as well as human: His
Who hung supreme, the suffering Man divine
Above the altar; Hers, the Mother pure
Whose glance informed his masculine tenderness
With deepest reverence; the Archangel armed,
Trampling man's enemy: all heroic forms
That fill the world of faith with voices, hearts,
And high companionship, to Silva now
Made but one inward and insistent world
With faces of his peers, with court and hall
And deference, and reverent vassalage
And filial pieties, — one current strong,
The warmly mingled life-blood of his mind,
Sustaining him even when he idly played
With rules, beliefs, charges, and ceremonies
As arbitrary fooling. Such revenge
Is wrought by the long travail of mankind
On him who scorns it, and would shape his life
Without obedience.
But his warrior's pride
Would take no wounds save on the breast. He faced
The fatal crowd: "I never shall repent!
If I have sinned my sin was made for me
By men's perverseness. There 's no blameless life
Save for the passionless, no sanctities
But have the selfsame roof and props with crime,

Or have their roots close interlaced with vileness.
If I had loved her less, been more a craven,
I had kept my place and won the easy praise
Of a true Spanish noble. But I loved,
And, loving, dared, — not Death the warrior
But Infamy that binds and strips and holds
The brand and lash. I have dared all for her.
She was my good, — what other men call heaven
And for the sake of it bear penances;
Nay, some of old were baited, tortured, flayed
To win their heaven. Heaven was their good,
She, mine. And I have braved for her all fires
Certain or threatened; for I go away
Beyond the reach of expiation, — far away
From sacramental blessing. Does God bless
No outlaw? Shut his absolution fast
In human breath? Is there no God for me
Save Him whose cross I have forsaken? — Well,
I am forever exiled, — but with her.
She is dragged out into the wilderness;
I, with my love, will be her providence.
I have a right to choose my good or ill,
A right to damn myself! The ill is mine.
I never will repent!" . . . .
Thus Silva, inwardly debating, all his ear
Turned into audience of a twofold mind;
For even in tumult full-fraught consciousness
Had plenteous being for a Self aloof
That gazed and listened, like a soul in dreams
Weaving the wondrous tale it marvels at.
But oft the conflict slackened, oft strong Love
With tidal energy returning laid
All other restlessness: Fedalma came
And with her visionary presence brought
What seemed a waking in the warm spring morn.

He still was pacing on the stony earth
Under the deepening night; the fresh-lit fires
Were flickering on dark forms and eyes that met
His forward and his backward tread; but she,
She was within him, making his whole self
Mere correspondence with her image: sense,
In all its deep recesses where it keeps
The mystic stores of ecstasy, was transformed
To memory that killed the hour, like wine.
Then Silva said: "She, by herself, is life.
What was my joy before I loved her, — what
Shall Heaven lure us with, love being lost?" —
For he was young.
But now around the fires
The Gypsy band felt freer; Juan's song
Was no more there, nor Juan's friendly ways
For links of amity 'twixt their wild mood
And this strange brother, this pale Spanish duke,
Who with their Gypsy badge upon his breast
Took readier place within their alien hearts
As a marked captive, who would fain escape.
And Nadar, who commanded them, had known
The prison in Bedmár. So now, in talk
Foreign to Spanish ears, they said their minds,
Discussed their chief's intent, the lot marked out
For this new brother. Would he wed their queen?
And some denied, saying their queen would wed
A true Zincalo duke, — one who would join
Their bands in Telemsán. But others thought
Young Hassan was to wed her; said their chief
Would never trust this noble of Castile,
Who in his very swearing was forsworn.
And then one fell to chanting, in wild notes
Recurrent like the moan of outshut winds,
The adjuration they were wont to use

To any Spaniard who would join their tribe:
Words of plain Spanish, lately stirred anew
And ready at new impulse. Soon the rest,
Drawn to the stream of sound, made unison
Higher and lower, till the tidal sweep
Seemed to assail the Duke and close him round
With force demonic. All debate till now
Had wrestled with the urgence of that oath
Already broken; now the newer oath
Thrust its loud presence on him. He stood still,
Close baited by loud-barking thoughts, — fierce hounds
Of that Supreme, the irreversible Past.

The Zincali *sing.*

Brother, hear and take the curse,
Curse of soul's and body's throes,
If you hate not all our foes,
Cling not fast to all our woes,
Turn a false Zincalo!

May you be accurst
By hunger and by thirst,
By spikéd pangs,
Starvation's fangs
Clutching you alone
When none but peering vultures hear your moan.

Curst by burning hands,
Curst by aching brow,
When on sea-wide sands
Fever lays you low;
By the maddened brain
When the running water glistens,
And the deaf ear listens, listens,
Prisoned fire within the vein,
On the tongue and on the lip

Not a sip
From the earth or skies ;
Hot the desert lies
Pressed into your anguish,
Narrowing earth and narrowing sky
Into lonely misery.
Lonely may you languish
Through the day and through the night,
Hate the darkness, hate the light,
Pray and find no ear,
Feel no brother near,
Till on death you cry,
Death who passes by,
And anew you groan,
Scaring the vultures all to leave you living lone.
Curst by soul's and body's throes
If you love the dark men's foes,
Cling not fast to all the dark men's woes,
Turn a false Zincalo !
Swear to hate the cruel cross,
The silver cross !
Glittering, laughing at the blood
Shed below it in a flood
When it glitters over Moorish porches ;
Laughing at the scent of flesh
When it glitters where the fagot scorches,
Burning life's mysterious mesh :
Blood of wandering Israël,
Blood of wandering Ismaël,
Blood, the drink of Christian scorn,
Blood of wanderers, sons of morn
Where the life of men began :
Swear to hate the cross ! —
Sign of all the wanderers' foes,
Sign of all the wanderers' woes, —

Else its curse light on you!
Else the curse upon you light
Of its sharp red-sworded might.
May it lie a blood-red blight
On all things within your sight:
On the white haze of the morn,
On the meadows and the corn,
On the sun and on the moon,
On the clearness of the noon,
On the darkness of the night.
May it fill your aching sight,—
Red-cross sword and sword blood-red,—
Till it press upon your head,
Till it lie within your brain,
Piercing sharp, a cross of pain,
Till it lie upon your heart,
Burning hot, a cross of fire,
Till from sense in every part
Pains have clustered like a stinging swarm
In the cross's form,
And you see naught but the cross of blood,
And you feel naught but the cross of fire:
Curst by all the cross's throes
If you hate not all our foes,
Cling not fast to all our woes,
Turn a false Zincalo!

A fierce delight was in the Gypsies' chant:
They thought no more of Silva, only felt
Like those broad-chested rovers of the night
Who pour exuberant strength upon the air.
To him it seemed as if the hellish rhythm,
Revolving in long curves that slackened now,
Now hurried, sweeping round again to slackness,
Would cease no more. What use to raise his voice,

Or grasp his weapon? He was powerless now,
With these new comrades of his future,—he
Who had been wont to have his wishes feared
And guessed at as a hidden law for men.
Even the passive silence of the night
That left these howlers mastery, even the moon,
Rising and staring with a helpless face,
Angered him. He was ready now to fly
At some loud throat, and give the signal so
For butchery of himself.
But suddenly
The sounds that travelled towards no foreseen close
Were torn right off and fringed into the night;
Sharp Gypsy ears had caught the onward strain
Of kindred voices joining in the chant.
All started to their feet and mustered close,
Auguring long-waited summons. It was come:
The summons to set forth and join their chief.
Fedalma had been called, and she was gone
Under safe escort, Juan following her:
The camp—the women, children, and old men—
Were moving slowly southward on the way
To Almería. Silva learned no more.
He marched perforce; what other goal was his
Than where Fedalma was? And so he marched
Through the dim passes and o'er rising hills,
Not knowing whither, till the morning came.

The Moorish hall in the castle at Bedmár. The morning twilight dimly shows stains of blood on the white marble floor; yet there has been a careful restoration of order among the sparse objects of furniture. Stretched on mats lie three corpses, the faces bare, the bodies

covered with mantles. A little way off, with rolled matting for a pillow, lies ZARCA, *sleeping. His chest and arms are bare; his weapons, turban, mail-shirt, and other upper garments lie on the floor beside him. In the outer gallery Zincali are pacing, at intervals, past the arched openings.*

ZARCA (*half rising and resting his elbow on the pillow while he looks round*).

The morning! I have slept for full three hours;
Slept without dreams, save of my daughter's face.
Its sadness waked me. Soon she will be here,
Soon must outlive the worst of all the pains
Bred by false nurture in an alien home, —
As if a lion in fangless infancy
Learned love of creatures that with fatal growth
It scents as natural prey, and grasps and tears,
Yet with heart-hunger yearns for, missing them.
She is a lioness. And they — the race
That robbed me of her — reared her to this pain.
He will be crushed and torn. There was no help.
But she, my child, will bear it. For strong souls
Live like fire-hearted suns to spend their strength
In furthest striving action; breathe more free
In mighty anguish than in trivial ease.
Her sad face waked me. I shall meet it soon
Waking . . . .

(*He rises and stands looking at the corpses.*

As now I look on these pale dead,
These blossoming branches crushed beneath the fall
Of that broad trunk to which I laid my axe
With fullest foresight. So will I ever face
In thought beforehand to its utmost reach
The consequences of my conscious deeds;
So face them after, bring them to my bed,

And never drug my soul to sleep with lies.
If they are cruel, they shall be arraigned
By that true name; they shall be justified
By my high purpose, by the clear-seen good
That grew into my vision as I grew,
And makes my nature's function, the full pulse
Of my Zincalo soul. The Catholics,
Arabs, and Hebrews have their god apiece
To fight and conquer for them, or be bruised
Like Allah, and yet keep avenging stores
Of patient wrath. Zincali have no god
Who speaks to them and calls them his, unless
I Zarca carry living in my frame
The power divine that chooses them and saves.
Life and more life unto the chosen, death
To all things living that would stifle them!
So speaks each god that makes a nation strong;
Burns trees and brutes and slays all hindering men.
The Spaniards boast their god the strongest now;
They win most towns by treachery, make most slaves,
Burn the most vines and men, and rob the most.
I fight against that strength, and in my turn
Slay these brave young who duteously strove.
Cruel? ay, it is cruel. But, how else?
To save, we kill; each blow we strike at guilt
Hurts innocence with its shock. Men might well seek
For purifying rites; even pious deeds
Need washing. But my cleansing waters flow
Solely from my intent.

(*He turns away from the bodies to where his garments lie, but does not lift them.*)

And she must suffer!
But she has looked on the unchangeable and bowed
Her head beneath the yoke. And she will walk
No more in chilling twilight, for to-day

Rises our sun. The difficult night is past;
We keep the bridge no more, but cross it; march
Forth to a land where all our wars shall be
With greedy obstinate plants that will not yield
Fruit for their nurture. All our race shall come
From north, west, east, a kindred multitude,
And make large fellowship, and raise inspired
The shout divine, the unison of resolve.
So I, so she, will see our race redeemed.
And their keen love of family and tribe
Shall no more thrive on cunning, hide and lurk
In petty arts of abject hunted life,
But grow heroic in the sanctioning light,
And feed with ardent blood a nation's heart.
That is my work: and it is well begun.
On to achievement!

(*He takes up the mail-shirt, and looks at it, then throws it down again.*)

No, I'll none of you!
To-day there'll be no fighting. A few hours,
And I shall doff these garments of the Moor:
Till then I will walk lightly and breathe high.

SEPHARDO (*appearing at the archway leading into the outer gallery*).

You bade me wake you . . . .

ZARCA.

Welcome, Doctor; see,
With that small task I did but beckon you
To graver work. You know these corpses?

SEPHARDO.

Yes.
I would they were not corpses. Storms will lay
The fairest trees and leave the withered stumps

This Alvar and the Duke were of one age,
And very loving friends. I minded not
The sight of Don Diego's corpse, for death
Gave him some gentleness, and had he lived
I had still hated him. But this young Alvar
Was doubly noble, as a gem that holds
Rare virtues in its lustre, and his death
Will pierce Don Silva with a poisoned dart.
This fair and curly youth was Arias,
A son of the Pachecos; this dark face —

ZARCA.

Enough! you know their names. I had divined
That they were near the Duke, most like had served
My daughter, were her friends. So rescued them
From being flung upon the heap of slain.
Beseech you, Doctor, if you owe me aught
As having served your people, take the pains
To see these bodies buried decently.
And let their names be writ above their graves,
As those of brave young Spaniards who died well.
I needs must bear this womanhood in my heart, —
Bearing my daughter there. For once she prayed, —
'T was at our parting, — "When you see fair hair
Be pitiful." And I am forced to look
On fair heads living and be pitiless.
Your service, Doctor, will be done to her.

SEPHARDO.

A service doubly dear. For these young dead,
And one less happy Spaniard who still lives,
Are offerings which I wrenched from out my heart,
Constrained by cries of Israel: while my hands
Rendered the victims at command, my eyes
Closed themselves vainly, as if vision lay

Through those poor loopholes only. I will go
And see the graves dug by some cypresses.

ZARCA.

Meanwhile the bodies shall rest here. Farewell.

(*Exit* SEPHARDO.)

Nay, 't is no mockery. She keeps me so
From hardening with the hardness of my acts.
This Spaniard shrouded in her love, — I would
He lay here too that I might pity him.

Morning. — The Plaça Santiago in Bedmár. A crowd of townsmen forming an outer circle: within, Zincali and Moorish soldiers drawn up round the central space. On the higher ground in front of the church a stake with fagots heaped, and at a little distance a gibbet. Moorish music. ZARCA *enters, wearing his gold necklace with the Gypsy badge of the flaming torch over the dress of a Moorish captain, accompanied by a small band of armed Zincali, who fall aside and range themselves with the other soldiers while he takes his stand in front of the stake and gibbet. The music ceases, and there is expectant silence.*

ZARCA.

Men of Bedmár, well-wishers, and allies,
Whether of Moorish or of Hebrew blood,
Who, being galled by the hard Spaniard's yoke,
Have welcomed our quick conquest as release,
I, Zarca, the Zincalo chieftain, hold
By delegation of the Moorish King
Supreme command within this town and fort.
Nor will I, with false show of modesty,

Profess myself unworthy of this post,
For so I should but tax the giver's choice.
And, as ye know, while I was prisoner here,
Forging the bullets meant for Moorish hearts,
But likely now to reach another mark,
I learned the secrets of the town's defence,
Caught the loud whispers of your discontent,
And so could serve the purpose of the Moor
As the edge's keenness serves the weapon's weight.
And my Zincali, lynx-eyed, lithe of limb,
Tracked out the high Sierra's hidden path,
Guided the hard ascent, and were the first
To scale the walls and brave the showering stones.
In brief, I reached this rank through service done
By thought of mine and valor of my tribe,
Yet hold it but in trust, with readiness
To lay it down; for I and my Zincali
Will never pitch our tents again on land
The Spaniard grudges us: we seek a home
Where we may spread and ripen like the corn
By blessing of the sun and spacious earth.
Ye wish us well, I think, and are our friends?

CROWD.

Long life to Zarca and his strong Zincali!

ZARCA.

Now, for the cause of our assembling here.
'T was my command that rescued from your hands
That Spanish Prior and Inquisitor
Whom in fierce retribution you had bound
And meant to burn, tied to a planted cross.
I rescued him with promise that his death
Should be more signal in its justice, — made
Public in fullest sense, and orderly.

Here, then, you see the stake, — slow death by fire;
And there a gibbet, — swift death by the cord.
Now hear me, Moors and Hebrews of Bedmár,
Our kindred by the warmth of Eastern blood!
Punishing cruel wrong by cruelty
We copy Christian crime. Vengeance is just:
Justly we rid the earth of human fiends
Who carry hell for pattern in their souls.
But in high vengeance there is noble scorn:
It tortures not the torturer, nor gives
Iniquitous payment for iniquity.
The great avenging angel does not crawl
To kill the serpent with a mimic fang;
He stands erect, with sword of keenest edge
That slays like lightning. So too we will slay
The cruel man; slay him because he works
Woe to mankind. And I have given command
To pile these fagots, not to burn quick flesh,
But for a sign of that dire wrong to men
Which arms our wrath with justice. While, to show
This Christian worshipper that we obey
A better law than his, he shall be led
Straight to the gibbet and to swiftest death.
For I, the chief of the Zincali, will,
My people shed no blood but what is shed
In heat of battle or in judgment strict
With calm deliberation on the right.
Such is my will, and if it please you, — well.

CROWD.

It pleases us. Long life to Zarca!

ZARCA.

Hark!
The bell is striking, and they bring even now
The prisoner from the fort. What, Nadar?

NADAR (*has appeared, cutting the crowd, and advancing toward* ZARCA *till he is near enough to speak in an undertone*).

Chief,
I have obeyed your word, have followed it
As water does the furrow in the rock.

ZARCA.

Your band is here?

NADAR.

Yes, and the Spaniard too.

ZARCA.

'T was so I ordered.

NADAR.

Ay, but this sleek hound,
Who slipped his collar off to join the wolves,
Has still a heart for none but kennelled brutes.
He rages at the taking of the town,
Says all his friends are butchered; and one corpse
He stumbled on, — well, I would sooner be
A dead Zincalo's dog, and howl for him,
Than be this Spaniard. Rage has made him whiter.
One townsman taunted him with his escape,
And thanked him for so favoring us. . . . .

ZARCA.

Enough!
You gave him my command that he should wait
Within the castle, till I saw him?

NADAR.

Yes.
But he defied me, broke away, ran loose
I know not whither; he may soon be here.
I came to warn you, lest he work us harm.

ZARCA.

Fear not, I know the road I travel by:
Its turns are no surprises. He who rules
Must humor full as much as he commands;
Must let men vow impossibilities;
Grant folly's prayers that hinder folly's wish
And serve the ends of wisdom. Ah, he comes!

[Sweeping like some pale herald from the dead,
Whose shadow-nurtured eyes, dazed by full light,
See naught without, but give reverted sense
To the soul's imagery, Silva came,
The wondering people parting wide to get
Continuous sight of him as he passed on, —
This high hidalgo, who through blooming years
Had shone on men with planetary calm,
Believed in with all sacred images
And saints that must be taken as they were,
Though rendering meagre service for men's praise,
Bareheaded now, carrying an unsheathed sword,
And on his breast, where late he bore the cross,
Wearing the Gypsy badge, his form aslant,
Driven, it seemed, by some invisible chase,
Right to the front of Zarca. There he paused.]

DON SILVA.

Chief, you are treacherous, cruel, devilish, —
Relentless as a curse that once let loose
From lips of wrath, lives bodiless to destroy,
And darkly traps a man in nets of guilt
Which could not weave themselves in open day
Before his eyes. Oh, it was bitter wrong
To hold this knowledge locked within your mind,
To stand with waking eyes in broadest light,
And see me, dreaming, shed my kindred's blood.

'T is horrible that men with hearts and hands
Should smile in silence like the firmament
And see a fellow-mortal draw a lot
On which themselves have written agony!
Such injury has no redress, no healing
Save what may lie in stemming further ill.
Poor balm for maiming! Yet I come to claim it.

ZARCA.

First prove your wrongs, and I will hear your claim.
Mind, you are not commander of Bedmár,
Nor duke, nor knight, nor anything for me,
Save one Zincalo, one of my subject tribe,
Over whose deeds my will is absolute.
You chose that lot, and would have railed at me
Had I refused it you: I warned you first
What oaths you had to take ....

DON SILVA.

You never warned me
That you had linked yourself with Moorish men
To take this town and fortress of Bedmár, —
Slay my near kinsmen, him who held my place,
Our house's heir and guardian, — slay my friend,
My chosen brother, — desecrate the church
Where once my mother held me in her arms,
Making the holy chrism holier
With tears of joy that fell upon my brow!
You never warned ....

ZARCA.

I warned you of your oath.
You shrank not, were resolved, were sure your place
Would never miss you, and you had your will.
I am no priest, and keep no consciences:
I keep my own place and my own command.

DON SILVA.

I said my place would never miss me — yes!
A thousand Spaniards died on that same day
And were not missed; their garments clothed the backs
That else were bare . . . .

ZARCA.

But you were just the one
Above the thousand, had you known the die
That fate was throwing then.

DON SILVA.

You knew it, — you!
With fiendish knowledge, smiling at the end.
You knew what snares had made my flying steps
Murderous; you let me lock my soul with oaths
Which your acts made a hellish sacrament.
I say, you knew this as a fiend would know it,
And let me damn myself.

ZARCA.

The deed was done
Before you took your oath, or reached our camp, —
Done when you slipped in secret from the post
'T was yours to keep, and not to meditate
If others might not fill it. For your oath,
What man is he who brandishes a sword
In darkness, kills his friends, and rages then
Against the night that kept him ignorant?
Should I, for one unstable Spaniard, quit
My steadfast ends as father and as chief;
Renounce my daughter and my people's hope,
Lest a deserter should be made ashamed?

DON SILVA.

Your daughter, — O great God! I vent but madness.
The past will never change. I come to stem

Harm that may yet be hindered. Chief — this stake —
Tell me who is to die! Are you not bound
Yourself to him you took in fellowship?
The town is yours; let me but save the blood
That still is warm in men who were my . . . .

ZARCA.

Peace!

They bring the prisoner.

[Zarca waved his arm
With head averse, in peremptory sign
That 'twixt them now there should be space and silence.
Most eyes had turned to where the prisoner
Advanced among his guards; and Silva too
Turned eagerly, all other striving quelled
By striving with the dread lest he should see
His thought outside him. And he saw it there.
The prisoner was Father Isidor:
The man whom once he fiercely had accused
As author of his misdeeds, — whose designs
Had forced him into fatal secrecy.
The imperious and inexorable Will
Was yoked, and he who had been pitiless
To Silva's love, was led to pitiless death.
O hateful victory of blind wishes, — prayers
Which hell had overheard and swift fulfilled!
The triumph was a torture, turning all
The strength of passion into strength of pain.
Remorse was born within him, that dire birth
Which robs all else of nurture, — cancerous,
Forcing each pulse to feed its anguish, changing
All sweetest residues of a healthy life
To fibrous clutches of slow misery.
Silva had but rebelled, — he was not free;
And all the subtle cords that bound his soul

Were tightened by the strain of one rash leap
Made in defiance. He accused no more,
But dumbly shrank before accusing throngs
Of thoughts, the impetuous recurrent rush
Of all his past-created, unchanged self.
The Father came bareheaded, frocked, a rope
Around his neck, — but clad with majesty,
The strength of resolute undivided souls
Who, owning law, obey it. In his hand
He bore a crucifix, and praying, gazed
Solely on that white image. But his guards
Parted in front, and paused as they approached
The centre, where the stake was. Isidor
Lifted his eyes to look around him, — calm,
Prepared to speak last words of willingness
To meet his death, — last words of faith unchanged,
That, working for Christ's kingdom, he had wrought
Righteously. But his glance met Silva's eyes
And drew him. Even images of stone
Look living with reproach on him who maims,
Profanes, defiles them. Silva penitent
Moved forward, would have knelt before the man
Who still was one with all the sacred things
That came back on him in their sacredness,
Kindred, and oaths, and awe, and mystery.
But, at the sight, the Father thrust the cross
With deprecating act before him, and his face
Pale-quivering, flashed out horror like white light
Flashed from the angel's sword that dooming drave
The sinner to the wilderness. He spoke.]

FATHER ISIDOR.

Back from me, traitorous and accursed man!
Defile not me, who grasp the holiest,

With touch or breath! Thou foulest murderer!
Fouler than Cain who struck his brother down
In jealous rage, thou for thy base delight
Hast oped the gate for wolves to come and tear
Uncounted brethren, weak and strong alike,
The helpless priest, the warrior all unarmed
Against a faithless leader: on thy head
Will rest the sacrilege, on thy soul the blood.
These blind Zincali, misbelievers, Moors,
Are but as Pilate and his soldiery;
Thou, Judas, weighted with that heaviest crime
Which deepens hell! I warned you of this end.
A traitorous leader, false to God and man,
A knight apostate, you shall soon behold
Above your people's blood the light of flames
Kindled by you to burn me, — burn the flesh
Twin with your father's. O most wretched man!
Whose memory shall be of broken oaths, —
Broken for lust, — I turn away mine eyes
Forever from you. See, the stake is ready:
And I am ready too.

DON SILVA.

It shall not be!

(*Raising his sword he rushes in front of the guards who are advancing, and impedes them.*)

If you are human, Chief, hear my demand!
Stretch not my soul upon the endless rack
Of this man's torture!

ZARCA.

Stand aside, my lord!
Put up your sword. You vowed obedience
To me, your chief. It was your latest vow.

DON SILVA.

No! hew me from the spot, or fasten me
Amid the fagots too, if he must burn.

ZARCA.

What should befall that persecuting monk
Was fixed before you came: no cruelty,
No nicely measured torture, weight for weight
Of injury, no luscious-toothed revenge
That justifies the injurer by its joy:
I seek but rescue and security
For harmless men, and such security
Means death to vipers and inquisitors.
These fagots shall but innocently blaze
In sign of gladness, when this man is dead,
That one more torturer has left the earth.
'T is not for infidels to burn live men
And ape the rules of Christian piety.
This hard oppressor shall not die by fire:
He mounts the gibbet, dies a speedy death,
That, like a transfixed dragon, he may cease
To vex mankind. Quick, guards, and clear the path!

[As well-trained hounds that hold their fleetness tense
In watchful, loving fixity of dark eyes,
And move with movement of their master's will,
The Gypsies with a wavelike swiftness met
Around the Father, and in wheeling course
Passed beyond Silva to the gibbet's foot,
Behind their chieftain. Sudden left alone
With weapon bare, the multitude aloof,
Silva was mazed in doubtful consciousness,
As one who slumbering in the day awakes
From striving into freedom, and yet feels
His sense half captive to intangible things;
Then with a flush of new decision sheathed

His futile naked weapon, and strode quick
To Zarca, speaking with a voice new-toned,
The struggling soul's hoarse, suffocated cry
Beneath the grappling anguish of despair.]

DON SILVA.

Zincalo, devil, blackest infidel!
You cannot hate that man as you hate me!
Finish your torture, — take me, — lift me up
And let the crowd spit at me, — every Moor
Shoot reeds at me, and kill me with slow death
Beneath the midday fervor of the sun, —
Or crucify me with a thieving hound, —
Slake your hate so, and I will thank it: spare me
Only this man!

ZARCA.

Madman, I hate you not.
But if I did, my hate were poorly served
By my device, if I should strive to mix
A bitterer misery for you than to taste
With leisure of a soul in unharmed limbs
The flavor of your folly. For my course,
It has a goal, and takes no truant path
Because of you. I am your Chief: to me
You are but a Zincalo in revolt.

DON SILVA.

No, I am no Zincalo! I disown
The name I took in madness. Here I tear
This badge away. I am a Catholic knight,
A Spaniard who will die a Spaniard's death!

[Hark! while he casts the badge upon the ground
And tramples on it, Silva hears a shout:
Was it a shout that threatened him? He looked
From out the dizzying flames of his own rage

In hope of adversaries, — and he saw above
The form of Father Isidor upswung
Convulsed with martyr throes; and knew the shout
For wonted exultation of the crowd
When malefactors die, — or saints, or heroes.
And now to him that white-frocked murdered form
Which hanging judged him as its murderer,
Turned to a symbol of his guilt, and stirred
Tremors till then unwaked. With sudden snatch
At something hidden in his breast, he strode
Right upon Zarca: at the instant, down
Fell the great Chief, and Silva, staggering back,
Heard not the shriek of the Zincali, felt
Not their fierce grasp, — heard, felt but Zarca's words
Which seemed his soul outleaping in a cry
And urging men to run like rival waves
Whose rivalry is but obedience.

ZARCA (*as he falls*).

My daughter! call her! Call my daughter!

NADAR (*supporting* ZARCA *and crying to the Gypsies who have clutched* SILVA).

Stay!
Tear not the Spaniard, tie him to the stake:
Hear what the Chief shall bid us, — there is time!

[Swiftly they tied him, pleasing vengeance so
With promise that would leave them free to watch
Their stricken good, their Chief stretched helplessly
Pillowed upon the strength of loving limbs.
He heaved low groans, but would not spend his breath
In useless words: he waited till *she* came,
Keeping his life within the citadel
Of one great hope. And now around him closed

(But in wide circle, checked by loving fear)
His people all, holding their wails suppressed
Lest death believed-in should be over-bold:
All life hung on their Chief, — he would not die;
His image gone, there were no wholeness left
To make a world of for Zincali's thought.
Eager they stood, but hushed; the outer crowd
Spoke only in low murmurs, and some climbed
And clung with legs and arms on perilous coigns,
Striving to see where that colossal life
Lay panting, — lay a Titan struggling still
To hold and give the precious hidden fire
Before the stronger grappled him. Above
The young bright morning cast athwart white walls
Her shadows blue, and with their clear-cut line,
Mildly inexorable as the dial-hand's
Measured the shrinking future of an hour
Which held a shrinking hope. And all the while
The silent beat of time in each man's soul
Made aching pulses.

But the cry, "She comes!"
Parted the crowd like waters: and she came.
Swiftly as once before, inspired with joy,
She flashed across the space and made new light,
Glowing upon the glow of evening,
So swiftly now she came, inspired with woe,
Strong with the strength of all her father's pain,
Thrilling her as with fire of rage divine
And battling energy. She knew, — saw all:
The stake with Silva bound, — her father pierced, —
To this she had been born: the second time
Her father called her to the task of life.

She knelt beside him. Then he raised himself,
And on her face there flashed from his the light

As of a star that waned and flames anew
In mighty dissolution: 't was the flame
Of a surviving trust, in agony.
He spoke the parting prayer that was command,
Must sway her will, and reign invisibly.]

ZARCA.

My daughter, you have promised, — you will live
To save our people. In my garments here
I carry written pledges from the Moor:
He will keep faith in Spain and Africa.
Your weakness may be stronger than my strength,
Winning more love. I cannot tell the end.
I held my people's good within my breast.
Behold, now I deliver it to you.
See, it still breathes unstrangled, — if it dies,
Let not your failing will be murderer. Rise,
And tell our people now I wait in pain, —
I cannot die until I hear them say
They will obey you.

[Meek, she pressed her lips
With slow solemnity upon his brow,
Sealing her pledges. Firmly then she rose,
And met her people's eyes with kindred gaze,
Dark-flashing, fired by effort strenuous
Trampling on pain.]

FEDALMA.

Zincali all, who hear!
Your Chief is dying: I his daughter live
To do his dying will. He asks you now
To promise me obedience as your Queen,
That we may seek the land he won for us,
And live the better life for which he toiled.
Speak now, and fill my father's dying ear

With promise that you will obey him dead,
Obeying me his child.

[Straightway arose
A shout of promise, sharpening into cries
That seemed to plead despairingly with death.]

THE ZINCALI.

We will obey! Our Chief shall never die!
We will obey him, — will obey our Queen!

[The shout unanimous, the concurrent rush
Of many voices, quiring shook the air
With multitudinous wave: now rose, now fell,
Then rose again, the echoes following slow,
As if the scattered brethren of the tribe
Had caught afar and joined the ready vow.
Then some could hold no longer, but must rush
To kiss his dying feet, and some to kiss
The hem of their Queen's garment. But she raised
Her hand to hush them. "Hark! your Chief may speak
Another wish." Quickly she kneeled again,
While they upon the ground kept motionless,
With head outstretched. They heard his words; for now,
Grasping at Nadar's arm, he spoke more loud,
As one who, having fought and conquered, hurls
His strength away with hurling off his shield.]

ZARCA.

Let loose the Spaniard! give him back his sword;
He cannot move to any vengeance more, —
His soul is locked 'twixt two opposing crimes.
I charge you let him go unharmed and free
Now through your midst. . . . .

[With that he sank again, —
His breast heaved strongly tow'rd sharp sudden falls,

And all his life seemed needed for each breath:
Yet once he spoke.]

My daughter, lay your arm
Beneath my head, — so, — bend and breathe on me.
I cannot see you more, — the Night is come.
Be strong, — remember, — I can only — die.

[His voice went into silence, but his breast
Heaved long and moaned: its broad strength kept a life
That heard naught, saw naught, save what once had been,
And what might be in days and realms afar, —
Which now in pale procession faded on
Toward the thick darkness. And she bent above
In sacramental watch to see great Death,
Companion of her future, who would wear
Forever in her eyes her father's form.

And yet she knew that hurrying feet had gone
To do the Chief's behest, and in her soul
He who was once its lord was being jarred
With loosening of cords, that would not loose
The tightening torture of his anguish. This, —
Oh she knew it! — knew it as martyrs knew
The prongs that tore their flesh, while yet their tongues
Refused the ease of lies. In moments high
Space widens in the soul. And so she knelt,
Clinging with piety and awed resolve
Beside this altar of her father's life,
Seeing long travel under solemn suns
Stretching beyond it; never turned her eyes,
Yet felt that Silva passed; beheld his face
Pale, vivid, all alone, imploring her
Across black waters fathomless.

And he passed.
The Gypsies made wide pathway, shrank aloof
As those who fear to touch the thing they hate,
Lest hate triumphant, mastering all the limbs,
Should tear, bite, crush, in spite of hindering will.
Slowly he walked, reluctant to be safe
And bear dishonored life which none assailed;
Walked hesitatingly, all his frame instinct
With high-born spirit, never used to dread
Or crouch for smiles, yet stung, yet quivering
With helpless strength, and in his soul convulsed
By visions where pale horror held a lamp
Over wide-reaching crime. Silence hung round:
It seemed the Plaça hushed itself to hear
His footsteps and the Chief's deep dying breath.
Eyes quickened in the stillness, and the light
Seemed one clear gaze upon his misery.
And yet he could not pass her without pause:
One instant he must pause and look at her;
But with that glance at her averted head,
New-urged by pain he turned away and went,
Carrying forever with him what he fled, —
Her murdered love, — her love, a dear wronged ghost,
Facing him, beauteous, 'mid the throngs of hell.

O fallen and forsaken! were no hearts
Amid that crowd, mindful of what had been? —
Hearts such as wait on beggared royalty,
Or silent watch by sinners who despair?

Silva had vanished. That dismissed revenge
Made larger room for sorrow in fierce hearts;
And sorrow filled them. For the Chief was dead.
The mighty breast subsided slow to calm,
Slow from the face the ethereal spirit waned,

As wanes the parting glory from the heights,
And leaves them in their pallid majesty.
Fedalma kissed the marble lips, and said,
"He breathes no more." And then a long loud wail
Poured out upon the morning, made her light
Ghastly as smiles on some fair maniac's face
Smiling unconscious o'er her bridegroom's corse.
The wailing men in eager press closed round,
And made a shadowing pall beneath the sun.
They lifted reverent the prostrate strength,
Sceptred anew by death. Fedalma walked
Tearless, erect, following the dead, — her cries
Deep smothering in her breast, as one who guides
Her children through the wilds, and sees and knows
Of danger more than they, and feels more pangs,
Yet shrinks not, groans not, bearing in her heart
Their ignorant misery and their trust in her.

BOOK V.

THE eastward rocks of Almería's bay
Answer long farewells of the travelling sun
With softest glow as from an inward pulse
Changing and flushing: all the Moorish ships
Seem conscious too, and shoot out sudden shadows;
Their black hulls snatch a glory, and their sails
Show variegated radiance, gently stirred
Like broad wings poised. Two galleys moored apart
Show decks as busy as a home of ants
Storing new forage; from their sides the boats
Slowly pushed off, anon with flashing oar
Make transit to the quay's smooth-quarried edge,
Where thronging Gypsies are in haste to lade
Each as it comes with grandames, babes, and wives,
Or with dust-tinted goods, the company
Of wandering years. Naught seems to lie unmoved,
For 'mid the throng the lights and shadows play,
And make all surface eager, while the boats
Sway restless as a horse that heard the shouts
And surging hum incessant. Naked limbs
With beauteous ease bend, lift, and throw, or raise
High signalling hands. The black-haired mother steps
Athwart the boat's edge, and with opened arms,
A wandering Isis outcast from the gods,
Leans towards her lifted little one. The boat
Full-laden cuts the waves, and dirge-like cries
Rise and then fall within it as it moves
From high to lower and from bright to dark.
Hither and thither, grave white-turbaned Moors
Move helpfully, and some bring welcome gifts,

Bright stuffs and cutlery, and bags of seed
To make new waving crops in Africa.
Others aloof with folded arms slow-eyed
Survey man's labor, saying, "God is great;"
Or seek with question deep the Gypsies' root,
And whether their false faith, being small, will prove
Less damning than the copious false creeds
Of Jews and Christians: Moslem subtlety
Found balanced reasons, warranting suspense
As to whose hell was deepest, — 't was enough
That there was room for all. Thus the sedate.
The younger heads were busy with the tale
Of that great Chief whose exploits helped the Moor.
And, talking still, they shouldered past their friends,
Following some lure which held their distant gaze
To eastward of the quay, where yet remained
A low black tent close guarded all around
By armed Zincali. Fronting it above,
Raised by stone steps that sought a jutting strand,
Fedalma stood and marked with anxious watch
Each laden boat the remnant lessening
Of cargo on the shore, or traced the course
Of Nadar to and fro in hard command
Of noisy tumult; imaging oft anew
How much of labor still deferred the hour
When they must lift the boat and bear away
Her father's coffin, and her feet must quit
This shore forever. Motionless she stood,
Black-crowned with wreaths of many-shadowed hair;
Black-robed, but wearing wide upon her breast
Her father's golden necklace and his badge.
Her limbs were motionless, but in her eyes
And in her breathing lip's soft tremulous curve
Was intense motion as of prisoned fire
Escaping subtly in outleaping thought.

She watches anxiously, and yet she dreams:
The busy moments now expand, now shrink
To narrowing swarms within the refluent space
Of changeful consciousness. For in her thought
Already she has left the fading shore,
Sails with her people, seeks an unknown land,
And bears the burning length of weary days
That parching fall upon her father's hope,
Which she must plant and see it wither only,—
Wither and die. She saw the end begun.
Zincali hearts were not unfaithful: she
Was centre to the savage loyalty
Which vowed obedience to Zarca dead.
But soon their natures missed the constant stress
Of his command, that, while it fired, restrained
By urgency supreme, and left no play
To fickle impulse scattering desire.
They loved their Queen, trusted in Zarca's child,
Would bear her o'er the desert on their arms
And think the weight a gladsome victory;
But that great force which knit them into one,
The invisible passion of her father's soul,
That wrought them visibly into its will,
And would have bound their lives with permanence,
Was gone. Already Hassan and two bands,
Drawn by fresh baits of gain, had newly sold
Their service to the Moors, despite her call,
Known as the echo of her father's will,
To all the tribe, that they should pass with her
Straightway to Telemsán. They were not moved
By worse rebellion than the wilful wish
To fashion their own service; they still meant
To come when it should suit them. But she said,
This is the cloud no bigger than a hand,
Sure-threatening. In a little while, the tribe

That was to be the ensign of the race,
And draw it into conscious union,
Itself would break in small and scattered bands
That, living on scant prey, would still disperse
And propagate forgetfulness. Brief years,
And that great purpose fed with vital fire
That might have glowed for half a century,
Subduing, quickening, shaping, like a sun, —
Would be a faint tradition, flickering low
In dying memories, fringing with dim light
The nearer dark.
Far, far the future stretched
Beyond that busy present on the quay,
Far her straight path beyond it. Yet she watched
To mark the growing hour, and yet in dream
Alternate she beheld another track,
And felt herself unseen pursuing it
Close to a wanderer, who with haggard gaze
Looked out on loneliness. The backward years —
Oh she would not forget them — would not drink
Of waters that brought rest, while he far off
Remembered. "Father, I renounced the joy, —
You must forgive the sorrow."
So she stood,
Her struggling life compressed into that hour,
Yearning, resolving, conquering; though she seemed
Still as a tutelary image sent
To guard her people and to be the strength
Of some rock-citadel.
Below her sat
Slim mischievous Hinda, happy, red-bedecked
With row of berries, grinning, nodding oft,
And shaking high her small dark arm and hand
Responsive to the black-maned Ismaël,
Who held aloft his spoil, and clad in skins

Seemed the Boy-prophet of the wilderness
Escaped from tasks prophetic. But anon
Hinda would backward turn upon her knees,
And like a pretty loving hound would bend
To fondle her Queen's feet, then lift her head
Hoping to feel the gently pressing palm
Which touched the deeper sense. Fedalma knew, —
From out the black robe stretched her speaking hand
And shared the girl's content.

So the dire hours
Burdened with destiny, — the death of hopes
Darkening long generations, or the birth
Of thoughts undying, — such hours sweep along
In their aerial ocean measureless
Myriads of little joys, that ripen sweet
And soothe the sorrowful spirit of the world,
Groaning and travailing with the painful birth
Of slow redemption.

But emerging now
From eastward fringing lines of idling men
Quick Juan lightly sought the upward steps
Behind Fedalma, and two paces off,
With head uncovered, said in gentle tones,
"Lady Fedalma!" — (Juan's password now
Used by no other,) and Fedalma turned,
Knowing who sought her. He advanced a step,
And meeting straight her large calm questioning gaze,
Warned her of some grave purport by a face
That told of trouble. Lower still he spoke.

JUAN.

Look from me, lady, towards a moving form
That quits the crowd and seeks the lonelier strand, —
A tall and gray-clad pilgrim . . . .

[Solemnly
His low tones fell on her, as if she passed
Into religious dimness among tombs,
And trod on names in everlasting rest.
Lingeringly she looked, and then with voice
Deep and yet soft, like notes from some long chord
Responsive to thrilled air, said:]

FEDALMA.

It is he!

[Juan kept silence for a little space,
With reverent caution, lest his lighter grief
Might seem a wanton touch upon her pain.
But time was urging him with visible flight,
Changing the shadows: he must utter all.]

JUAN.

That man was young when last I pressed his hand,—
In that dread moment when he left Bedmár.
He has aged since — the week has made him gray.
And yet I knew him, — knew the white-streaked hair
Before I saw his face, as I should know
The tear-dimmed writing of a friend. See now, —
Does he not linger, — pause? — perhaps expect . . . .

[Juan plead timidly: Fedalma's eyes
Flashed; and through all her frame there ran the shock
Of some sharp-wounding joy, like his who hastes
And dreads to come too late, and comes in time
To press a loved hand dying. She was mute
And made no gesture: all her being paused
In resolution, as some leonine wave
That makes a moment's silence ere it leaps.]

JUAN.

He came from Carthagena, in a boat
Too slight for safety; yon small two-oared boat

Below the rock; the fisher-boy within
Awaits his signal. But the pilgrim waits ....

FEDALMA.

Yes, I will go! — Father, I owe him this,
For loving me made all his misery.
And we will look once more, — will say farewell
As in a solemn rite to strengthen us
For our eternal parting. Juan, stay
Here in my place, to warn me were there need.
And, Hinda, follow me!

[All men who watched
Lost her regretfully, then drew content
From thought that she must quickly come again,
And filled the time with striving to be near.
She, down the steps, along the sandy brink
To where he stood, walked firm; with quickened step
The moment when each felt the other saw.
He moved at sight of her: their glances met;
It seemed they could no more remain aloof
Than nearing waters hurrying into one.
Yet their steps slackened and they paused apart,
Pressed backward by the force of memories
Which reigned supreme as death above desire.
Two paces off they stood and silently
Looked at each other. Was it well to speak?
Could speech be clearer, stronger, tell them more
Than that long gaze of their renouncing love?
They passed from silence hardly knowing how;
It seemed they heard each other's thought before.]

DON SILVA.

I go to be absolved, to have my life
Washed into fitness for an offering
To injured Spain. But I have naught to give

For that last injury to her I loved
Better than I loved Spain. I am accurst
Above all sinners, being made the curse
Of her I sinned for. Pardon! Penitence!
When they have done their utmost, still beyond
Out of their reach stands Injury unchanged
And changeless. I should see it still in heaven, —
Out of my reach, forever in my sight:
Wearing your grief, 't would hide the smiling seraphs
I bring no puling prayer, Fedalma, — ask
No balm of pardon that may soothe my soul
For others' bleeding wounds: I am not come
To say, "Forgive me:" you must not forgive,
For you must see me ever as I am, —
Your father's ....

FEDALMA.

Speak it not! Calamity
Comes like a deluge and o'erfloods our crimes,
Till sin is hidden in woe. You — I — we two,
Grasping we knew not what, that seemed delight,
Opened the sluices of that deep.

DON SILVA.

We two? —
Fedalma, you were blameless, helpless.

FEDALMA.

No!
It shall not be that you did aught alone.
For when we loved I willed to reign in you,
And I was jealous even of the day
If it could gladden you apart from me.
And so, it must be that I shared each deed
Our love was root of.

DON SILVA.

Dear! you share the woe,—
Nay, the worst dart of vengeance fell on you.

FEDALMA.

Vengeance! She does but sweep us with her skirts,—
She takes large space, and lies a baleful light
Revolving with long years,—sees children's children,
Blights them in their prime. Oh, if two lovers leaned
To breathe one air and spread a pestilence,
They would but lie two livid victims dead
Amid the city of the dying. We
With our poor petty lives have strangled one
That ages watch for vainly.

DON SILVA.

Deep despair
Fills all your tones as with slow agony.
Speak words that narrow anguish to some shape:
Tell me what dread is close before you?

FEDALMA.

None.
No dread, but clear assurance of the end.
My father held within his mighty frame
A people's life: great futures died with him
Never to rise, until the time shall ripe
Some other hero with the will to save
The lost Zincali.

DON SILVA.

Yet your people's shout—
I heard it—sounded as the plenteous rush
Of full-fed sources, shaking their wild souls
With power that promised sway.

FEDALMA.

Ah yes, that shout
Came from full hearts: they meant obedience.
But they are orphaned: their poor childish feet
Are vagabond in spite of love, and stray
Forgetful after little lures. For me, —
I am but as the funeral urn that bears
The ashes of a leader.

DON SILVA.

O great God!
What am I but a miserable brand
Lit by mysterious wrath? I lie cast down
A blackened branch upon the desolate ground
Where once I kindled ruin. I shall drink
No cup of purest water but will taste
Bitter with thy lone hopelessness, Fedalma.

FEDALMA.

Nay, Silva, think of me as one who sees
A light serene and strong on one sole path
Which she will tread till death. . . . .
He trusted me, and I will keep his trust:
My life shall be its temple. I will plant
His sacred hope within the sanctuary
And die its priestess, — though I die alone,
A hoary woman on the altar step,
Cold 'mid cold ashes. That is my chief good.
The deepest hunger of a faithful heart
Is faithfulness. Wish me naught else. And you, —
You too will live. . . . .

DON SILVA.

I go to Rome, to seek
The right to use my knightly sword again;

The right to fill my place and live or die
So that all Spaniards shall not curse my name.
I sat one hour upon the barren rock
And longed to kill myself; but then I said,
I will not leave my name in infamy,
I will not be perpetual rottenness
Upon the Spaniard's air. If I must sink
At last to hell, I will not take my stand
Among the coward crew who could not bear
The harm themselves had done, which others bore.
My young life yet may fill some bloody breach,
And I will take no pardon, not my own,
Not God's, — no pardon idly on my knees;
But it shall come to me upon my feet
And in the thick of action, and each deed
That carried shame and wrong shall be the sting
That drives me higher up the steep of honor
In deeds of duteous service to that Spain
Who nourished me on her expectant breast,
The heir of highest gifts. I will not fling
My earthly being down for carrion
To fill the air with loathing: I will be
The living prey of some fierce noble death
That leaps upon me while I move. Aloud
I said, "I will redeem my name," and then, —
I know not if aloud: I felt the words
Drinking up all my senses, — "She still lives.
I would not quit the dear familiar earth
Where both of us behold the selfsame sun,
Where there can be no strangeness 'twixt our thoughts
So deep as their communion." Resolute
I rose and walked. — Fedalma, think of me
As one who will regain the only life
Where he is other than apostate, — one
Who seeks but to renew and keep the vows

Of Spanish knight and noble. But the breach
Outside those vows — the fatal second breach —
Lies a dark gulf where I have naught to cast,
Not even expiation, — poor pretence,
Which changes naught but what survives the past,
And raises not the dead. That deep dark gulf
Divides us.

FEDALMA.

Yes, forever. We must walk
Apart unto the end. Our marriage rite
Is our resolve that we will each be true
To high allegiance, higher than our love, —
Our dear young love, — its breath was happiness!
But it had grown upon a larger life
Which tore its roots asunder. We rebelled, —
The larger life subdued us. Yet we are wed;
For we shall carry each the pressure deep
Of the other's soul. I soon shall leave the shore
The winds to-night will bear me far away.
My lord, farewell!

[He did not say "Farewell."
But neither knew that he was silent. She,
For one long moment, moved not. They knew naught
Save that they parted; for their mutual gaze
As with their soul's full speech forbade their hands
To seek each other, — those oft-clasping hands
Which had a memory of their own, and went
Widowed of one dear touch forevermore.
At last she turned and with swift movement passed,
Beckoning to Hinda, who was bending low
And lingered still to wash her shells, but soon
Leaping and scampering followed, while her Queen
Mounted the steps again and took her place.
Which Juan rendered silently.

And now
The press upon the quay was thinned; the ground
Was cleared of cumbering heaps, the eager shouts
Had sunk, and left a murmur more restrained
By common purpose. All the men ashore
Were gathering into ordered companies,
And with less clamor filled the waiting boats,
As if the speaking light commanded them
To quiet speed: for now the farewell glow
Was on the topmost heights, and where far ships
Were southward tending, tranquil, slow, and white
Upon the luminous meadow toward the verge.
The quay was in still shadow, and the boats
Went sombrely upon the sombre waves.
Fedalma watched again; but now her gaze
Takes in the eastward bay, where that small bark
Which held the fisher boy floats weightier
With one more life, that rests upon the oar
Watching with her. He would not go away
Till she was gone; he would not turn his face
Away from her at parting: but the sea
Should widen slowly 'twixt their seeking eyes.

The time was coming. Nadar had approached.
Was the Queen ready? Would she follow now
Her father's body? For the largest boat
Was waiting at the quay, the last strong band
Of armed Zincali ranged themselves in lines
To guard her passage and to follow her.
"Yes, I am ready;" and with action prompt
They cast aside the Gypsy's wandering tomb,
And fenced the space from curious Moors who pressed
To see Chief Zarca's coffin as it lay.
They raised it slowly, holding it aloft
On shoulders proud to bear the heavy load.

Bound on the coffin lay the chieftain's arms,
His Gypsy garments and his coat of mail.
Fedalma saw the burden lifted high,
And then descending followed. All was still.
The Moors aloof could hear the struggling steps
Beneath the lowered burden at the boat, —
The struggling calls subdued, till safe released
It lay within, the space around it filled
By black-haired Gypsies. Then Fedalma stepped
From off the shore and saw it flee away, —
The land that bred her helping the resolve
Which exiled her forever.

It was night
Before the ships weighed anchor and gave sail:
Fresh Night emergent in her clearness, lit
By the large crescent moon, with Hesperus
And those great stars that lead the eager host.
Fedalma stood and watched the little bark
Lying jet-black upon moon-whitened waves.
Silva was standing too. He too divined
A steadfast form that held him with its thought,
And eyes that sought him vanishing: he saw
The waters widen slowly, till at last
Straining he gazed and knew not if he gazed
On aught but blackness overhung by stars.]

THE LEGEND OF JUBAL.

WHEN Cain was driven from Jehovah's land
He wandered eastward, seeking some far strand
Ruled by kind gods who asked no offerings
Save pure field-fruits, as aromatic things,
To feed the subtler sense of frames divine
That lived on fragrance for their food and wine:
Wild joyous gods, who winked at faults and folly,
And could be pitiful and melancholy.
He never had a doubt that such gods were;
He looked within, and saw them mirrored there.
Some think he came at last to Tartary,
And some to Ind; but, howsoe'er it be,
His staff he planted where sweet waters ran,
And in that home of Cain the Arts began.

Man's life was spacious in the early world:
It paused, like some slow ship with sail unfurled
Waiting in seas by scarce a wavelet curled;
Beheld the slow star-paces of the skies,
And grew from strength to strength through centuries;
Saw infant trees fill out their giant limbs,
And heard a thousand times the sweet bird's marriage hymns.

In Cain's young city none had heard of Death
Save him, the founder; and it was his faith
That here, away from harsh Jehovah's law,
Man was immortal, since no halt or flaw
In Cain's own frame betrayed six hundred years,

But dark as pines that autumn never sears
His locks thronged backward as he ran, his frame
Rose like the orbéd sun each morn the same,
Lake-mirrored to his gaze; and that red brand,
The scorching impress of Jehovah's hand,
Was still clear-edged to his unwearied eye,
Its secret firm in time-fraught memory.
He said, "My happy offspring shall not know
That the red life from out a man may flow
When smitten by his brother." True, his race
Bore each one stamped upon his new-born face
A copy of the brand no whit less clear;
But every mother held that little copy dear.

Thus generations in glad idlesse throve,
Nor hunted prey, nor with each other strove;
For clearest springs were plenteous in the land,
And gourds for cups; the ripe fruits sought the hand,
Bending the laden boughs with fragrant gold;
And for their roofs and garments wealth untold
Lay everywhere in grasses and broad leaves:
They labored gently, as a maid who weaves
Her hair in mimic mats, and pauses oft
And strokes across her palm the tresses soft,
Then peeps to watch the poiséd butterfly,
Or little burdened ants that homeward hie.
Time was but leisure to their lingering thought,
There was no need for haste to finish aught;
But sweet beginnings were repeated still
Like infant babblings that no task fulfil;
For love, that loved not change, constrained the simple
will.

Till, hurling stones in mere athletic joy,
Strong Lamech struck and killed his fairest boy,
And tried to wake him with the tenderest cries,

And fetched and held before the glazéd eyes
The things they best had loved to look upon;
But never glance or smile or sigh he won.
The generations stood around those twain
Helplessly gazing, till their father Cain
Parted the press, and said, "He will not wake;
This is the endless sleep, and we must make
A bed deep down for him beneath the sod;
For know, my sons, there is a mighty God
Angry with all man's race, but most with me.
I fled from out His land in vain! — 't is He
Who came and slew the lad, for He has found
This home of ours, and we shall all be bound
By the harsh bands of His most cruel will,
Which any moment may some dear one kill.
Nay, though we live for countless moons, at last
We and all ours shall die like summers past.
This is Jehovah's will, and He is strong;
I thought the way I travelled was too long
For Him to follow me: my thought was vain!
He walks unseen, but leaves a track of pain,
Pale Death His footprint is, and He will come again!"

And a new spirit from that hour came o'er
The race of Cain: soft idlesse was no more,
But even the sunshine had a heart of care,
Smiling with hidden dread — a mother fair
Who folding to her breast a dying child
Beams with feigned joy that but makes sadness mild.
Death was now lord of Life, and at his word
Time, vague as air before, new terrors stirred,
With measured wing now audibly arose
Throbbing through all things to some unknown close.
Now glad Content by clutching Haste was torn,
And Work grew eager, and Device was born.

It seemed the light was never loved before,
Now each man said, "'T will go and come no more."
No budding branch, no pebble from the brook,
No form, no shadow, but new dearness took
From the one thought that life must have an end;
And the last parting now began to send
Diffusive dread through love and wedded bliss,
Thrilling them into finer tenderness.
Then Memory disclosed her face divine,
That like the calm nocturnal lights doth shine
Within the soul, and shows the sacred graves,
And shows the presence that no sunlight craves,
No space, no warmth, but moves among them all;
Gone and yet here, and coming at each call,
With ready voice and eyes that understand,
And lips that ask a kiss, and dear responsive hand.

Thus to Cain's race death was tear-watered seed
Of various life and action-shaping need.
But chief the sons of Lamech felt the stings
Of new ambition, and the force that springs
In passion beating on the shores of fate.
They said, "There comes a night when all too late
The mind shall long to prompt the achieving hand,
The eager thought behind closed portals stand,
And the last wishes to the mute lips press
Buried ere death in silent helplessness.
Then while the soul its way with sound can cleave,
And while the arm is strong to strike and heave,
Let soul and arm give shape that will abide
And rule above our graves, and power divide
With that great god of day, whose rays must bend
As we shall make the moving shadows tend.
Come, let us fashion acts that are to be,
When we shall lie in darkness silently,

As our young brother doth, whom yet we see
Fallen and slain, but reigning in our will
By that one image of him pale and still."

For Lamech's sons were heroes of their race:
Jabal, the eldest, bore upon his face
The look of that calm river-god, the Nile,
Mildly secure in power that needs not guile.
But Tubal-Cain was restless as the fire
That glows and spreads and leaps from high to higher
Where'er is aught to seize or to subdue;
Strong as a storm he lifted or o'erthrew,
His urgent limbs like rounded granite grew,
Such granite as the plunging torrent wears
And roaring rolls around through countless years.
But strength that still on movement must be fed,
Inspiring thought of change, devices bred,
And urged his mind through earth and air to rove
For force that he could conquer if he strove,
For lurking forms that might new tasks fulfil
And yield unwilling to his stronger will.
Such Tubal-Cain. But Jubal had a frame
Fashioned to finer senses, which became
A yearning for some hidden soul of things,
Some outward touch complete on inner springs
That vaguely moving bred a lonely pain,
A want that did but stronger grow with gain
Of all good else, as spirits might be sad
For lack of speech to tell us they are glad.

Now Jabal learned to tame the lowing kine,
And from their udders drew the snow-white wine
That stirs the innocent joy, and makes the stream
Of elemental life with fulness teem;
The star-browed calves he nursed with feeding hand,

And sheltered them, till all the little band
Stood mustered gazing at the sunset way
Whence he would come with store at close of day.
He soothed the silly sheep with friendly tone
And reared their staggering lambs that, older grown,
Followed his steps with sense-taught memory;
Till he, their shepherd, could their leader be
And guide them through the pastures as he would,
With sway that grew from ministry of good.
He spread his tents upon the grassy plain
Which, eastward widening like the open main,
Showed the first whiteness 'neath the morning star;
Near him his sister, deft, as women are,
Plied her quick skill in sequence to his thought
Till the hid treasures of the milk she caught
Revealed like pollen 'mid the petals white,
The golden pollen, virgin to the light.
Even the she-wolf with young, on rapine bent,
He caught and tethered in his mat-walled tent,
And cherished all her little sharp-nosed young
Till the small race with hope and terror clung
About his footsteps, till each new-reared brood,
Remoter from the memories of the wood,
More glad discerned their common home with man.
This was the work of Jabal: he began
The pastoral life, and, sire of joys to be,
Spread the sweet ties that bind the family
O'er dear dumb souls that thrilled at man's caress,
And shared his pains with patient helpfulness.

But Tubal-Cain had caught and yoked the fire,
Yoked it with stones that bent the flaming spire
And made it roar in prisoned servitude
Within the furnace, till with force subdued
It changed all forms he willed to work upon,

Till hard from soft, and soft from hard, he won.
The pliant clay he moulded as he would,
And laughed with joy when 'mid the heat it stood
Shaped as his hand had chosen, while the mass
That from his hold, dark, obstinate, would pass,
He drew all glowing from the busy heat,
All breathing as with life that he could beat
With thundering hammer, making it obey
His will creative, like the pale soft clay.
Each day he wrought and better than he planned,
Shape breeding shape beneath his restless hand.
(The soul without still helps the soul within,
And its deft magic ends what we begin.)
Nay, in his dreams his hammer he would wield
And seem to see a myriad types revealed,
Then spring with wondering triumphant cry,
And, lest the inspiring vision should go by,
Would rush to labor with that plastic zeal
Which all the passion of our life can steal
For force to work with. Each day saw the birth
Of various forms which, flung upon the earth,
Seemed harmless toys to cheat the exacting hour,
But were as seeds instinct with hidden power.
The axe, the club, the spikéd wheel, the chain,
Held silently the shrieks and moans of pain;
And near them latent lay in share and spade,
In the strong bar, the saw, and deep-curved blade,
Glad voices of the hearth and harvest-home,
The social good, and all earth's joy to come.
Thus to mixed ends wrought Tubal; and they say,
Some things he made have lasted to this day;
As, thirty silver pieces that were found
By Noah's children buried in the ground.
He made them from mere hunger of device,
Those small white disks; but they became the price

The traitor Judas sold his Master for;
And men still handling them in peace and war
Catch foul disease, that comes as appetite,
And lurks and clings as withering, damning blight.
But Tubal-Cain wot not of treachery,
Nor greedy lust, nor any ill to be,
Save the one ill of sinking into naught,
Banished from action and act-shaping thought.
He was the sire of swift-transforming skill,
Which arms for conquest man's ambitious will;
And round him gladly, as his hammer rung,
Gathered the elders and the growing young:
These handled vaguely and those plied the tools,
Till, happy chance begetting conscious rules,
The home of Cain with industry was rife,
And glimpses of a strong persistent life,
Panting through generations as one breath,
And filling with its soul the blank of death.

Jubal, too, watched the hammer, till his eyes,
No longer following its fall or rise,
Seemed glad with something that they could not see,
But only listened to — some melody,
Wherein dumb longings inward speech had found,
Won from the common store of struggling sound.
Then, as the metal shapes more various grew,
And, hurled upon each other, resonance drew,
Each gave new tones, the revelations dim
Of some external soul that spoke for him:
The hollow vessel's clang, the clash, the boom,
Like light that makes wide spiritual room
And skyey spaces in the spaceless thought,
To Jubal such enlargéd passion brought
That love, hope, rage, and all experience,
Were fused in vaster being, fetching thence

Concords and discords, cadences and cries
That seemed from some world-shrouded soul to rise,
Some rapture more intense, some mightier rage,
Some living sea that burst the bounds of man's brief age.

Then with such blissful trouble and glad care
For growth within unborn as mothers bear,
To the far woods he wandered, listening,
And heard the birds their little stories sing
In notes whose rise and fall seemed melted speech —
Melted with tears, smiles, glances — that can reach
More quickly through our frame's deep-winding night,
And without thought raise thought's best fruit, delight.
Pondering, he sought his home again and heard
The fluctuant changes of the spoken word:
The deep remonstrance and the argued want,
Insistent first in close monotonous chant,
Next leaping upward to defiant stand
Or downward beating like the resolute hand;
The mother's call, the children's answering cry,
The laugh's light cataract tumbling from on high;
The suasive repetitions Jabal taught,
That timid browsing cattle homeward brought;
The clear-winged fugue of echoes vanishing;
And through them all the hammer's rhythmic ring.
Jubal sat lonely, all around was dim,
Yet his face glowed with light revealed to him:
For as the delicate stream of odor wakes
The thought-wed sentience and some image makes
From out the mingled fragments of the past,
Finely compact in wholeness that will last,
So streamed as from the body of each sound
Subtler pulsations, swift as warmth, which found
All prisoned germs and all their powers unbound,
Till thought self-luminous flamed from memory,

And in creative vision wandered free.
Then Jubal, standing, rapturous arms upraised,
And on the dark with eager eyes he gazed,
As had some manifested god been there.
It was his thought he saw: the presence fair
Of unachieved achievement, the high task,
The struggling unborn spirit that doth ask
With irresistible cry for blood and breath,
Till feeding its great life we sink in death.

He said, "Were now those mighty tones and cries
That from the giant soul of earth arise,
Those groans of some great travail heard from far,
Some power at wrestle with the things that are,
Those sounds which vary with the varying form
Of clay and metal, and in sightless swarm
Fill the wide space with tremors: were these wed
To human voices with such passion fed
As does put glimmer in our common speech,
But might flame out in tones whose changing reach,
Surpassing meagre need, informs the sense
With fuller union, finer difference —
Were this great vision, now obscurely bright
As morning hills that melt in new-poured light,
Wrought into solid form and living sound,
Moving with ordered throb and sure rebound,
Then — Nay, I Jubal will that work begin!
The generations of our race shall win
New life, that grows from out the heart of this,
As spring from winter, or as lovers' bliss
From out the dull unknown of unwaked energies."

Thus he resolved, and in the soul-fed light
Of coming ages waited through the night,
Watching for that near dawn whose chiller ray

Showed but the unchanged world of yesterday;
Where all the order of his dream divine
Lay like Olympian forms within the mine;
Where fervor that could fill the earthly round
With throngéd joys of form-begotten sound
Must shrink intense within the patient power
That lonely labors through the niggard hour.
Such patience have the heroes who begin,
Sailing the first to lands which others win.
Jubal must dare as great beginners dare,
Strike form's first way in matter rude and bare,
And, yearning vaguely toward the plenteous quire
Of the world's harvest, make one poor small lyre.
He made it, and from out its measured frame
Drew the harmonic soul, whose answers came
With guidance sweet and lessons of delight
Teaching to ear and hand the blissful Right,
Where strictest law is gladness to the sense
And all desire bends toward obedience.

Then Jubal poured his triumph in a song —
The rapturous word that rapturous notes prolong
As radiance streams from smallest things that burn,
Or thought of loving into love doth turn.
And still his lyre gave companionship
In sense-taught concert as of lip with lip.
Alone amid the hills at first he tried
His wingéd song; then with adoring pride
And bridegroom's joy at leading forth his bride,
He said, "This wonder which my soul hath found,
This heart of music in the might of sound,
Shall forthwith be the share of all our race
And like the morning gladden common space:
The song shall spread and swell as rivers do,
And I will teach our youth with skill to woo

This living lyre, to know its secret will,
Its fine division of the good and ill.
So shall men call me sire of harmony,
And where great Song is, there my life shall be."

Thus glorying as a god beneficent,
Forth from his solitary joy he went
To bless mankind. It was at evening,
When shadows lengthen from each westward thing,
When imminence of change makes sense more fine
And light seems holier in its grand decline.
The fruit-trees wore their studded coronal,
Earth and her children were at festival,
Glowing as with one heart and one consent —
Thought, love, trees, rocks, in sweet warm radiance blent.

The tribe of Cain was resting on the ground,
The various ages wreathed in one broad round.
Here lay, while children peeped o'er his huge thighs,
The sinewy man embrowned by centuries;
Here the broad-bosomed mother of the strong
Looked, like Demeter, placid o'er the throng
Of young lithe forms whose rest was movement too —
Tricks, prattle, nods, and laughs that lightly flew,
And swayings as of flower-beds where Love blew.
For all had feasted well upon the flesh
Of juicy fruits, on nuts, and honey fresh,
And now their wine was health-bred merriment,
Which through the generations circling went,
Leaving none sad, for even father Cain
Smiled as a Titan might, despising pain.
Jabal sat climbed on by a playful ring
Of children, lambs, and whelps, whose gambolling,
With tiny hoofs, paws, hands, and dimpled feet,
Made barks, bleats, laughs, in pretty hubbub meet.

But Tubal's hammer rang from far away,
Tubal alone would keep no holiday,
His furnace must not slack for any feast,
For of all hardship work he counted least;
He scorned all rest but sleep, where every dream
Made his repose more potent action seem.

Yet with health's nectar some strange thirst was blent,
The fateful growth, the unnamed discontent,
The inward shaping toward some unborn power,
Some deeper-breathing act, the being's flower.
After all gestures, words, and speech of eyes,
The soul had more to tell, and broke in sighs.
Then from the east, with glory on his head
Such as low-slanting beams on corn-waves spread,
Came Jubal with his lyre: there 'mid the throng,
Where the blank space was, poured a solemn song,
Touching his lyre to full harmonic throb
And measured pulse, with cadences that sob,
Exult and cry, and search the inmost deep
Where the dark sources of new passion sleep.
Joy took the air, and took each breathing soul,
Embracing them in one entrancéd whole,
Yet thrilled each varying frame to various ends,
As Spring new-waking through the creature sends
Or rage or tenderness; more plenteous life
Here breeding dread, and there a fiercer strife.
He who had lived through twice three centuries,
Whose months monotonous, like trees on trees,
In hoary forests, stretched a backward maze,
Dreamed himself dimly through the travelled days
Till in clear light he paused, and felt the sun
That warmed him when he was a little one;
Felt that true heaven, the recovered past,
The dear small Known amid the Unknown vast,

And in that heaven wept. But younger limbs
Thrilled toward the future, that bright land which swims
In western glory, isles and streams and bays,
Where hidden pleasures float in golden haze.
And in all these the rhythmic influence,
Sweetly o'ercharging the delighted sense,
Flowed out in movements, little waves that spread
Enlarging, till in tidal union led
The youths and maidens both alike long-tressed,
By grace-inspiring melody possessed,
Rose in slow dance, with beauteous floating swerve
Of limbs and hair, and many a melting curve
Of ringéd feet swayed by each close-linked palm:
Then Jubal poured more rapture in his psalm,
The dance fired music, music fired the dance,
The glow diffusive lit each countenance,
Till all the gazing elders rose and stood
With glad yet awful shock of that mysterious good.
Even Tubal caught the sound, and wondering came,
Urging his sooty bulk like smoke-wrapt flame
Till he could see his brother with the lyre,
The work for which he lent his furnace-fire
And diligent hammer, witting naught of this —
This power in metal shape which made strange bliss,
Entering within him like a dream full-fraught
With new creations finished in a thought.

The sun had sunk, but music still was there,
And when this ceased, still triumph filled the air:
It seemed the stars were shining with delight
And that no night was ever like this night.
All clung with praise to Jubal: some besought
That he would teach them his new skill; some caught,
Swiftly as smiles are caught in looks that meet,
The tone's melodic change and rhythmic beat:

'T was easy following where invention trod —
All eyes can see when light flows out from God.

And thus did Jubal to his race reveal
Music their larger soul, where woe and weal
Filling the resonant chords, the song, the dance,
Moved with a wider-wingéd utterance.
Now many a lyre was fashioned, many a song
Raised echoes new, old echoes to prolong,
Till things of Jubal's making were so rife,
"Hearing myself," he said, "hems in my life,
And I will get me to some far-off land,
Where higher mountains under heaven stand
And touch the blue at rising of the stars,
Whose song they hear where no rough mingling mars
The great clear voices. Such lands there must be,
Where varying forms make varying symphony —
Where other thunders roll amid the hills,
Some mightier wind a mightier forest fills
With other strains through other-shapen boughs;
Where bees and birds and beasts that hunt or browse
Will teach me songs I know not. Listening there,
My life shall grow like trees both tall and fair
That rise and spread and bloom toward fuller fruit each
year."

He took a raft, and travelled with the stream
Southward for many a league, till he might deem
He saw at last the pillars of the sky,
Beholding mountains whose white majesty
Rushed through him as new awe, and made new song
That swept with fuller wave the chords along,
Weighting his voice with deep religious chime,
The iteration of slow chant sublime.
It was the region long inhabited

By all the race of Seth; and Jubal said:
"Here have I found my thirsty soul's desire,
Eastward the hills touch heaven, and evening's fire
Flames through deep waters; I will take my rest,
And feed anew from my great mother's breast,
The sky-clasped Earth, whose voices nurture me
As the flowers' sweetness doth the honey-bee."
He lingered wandering for many an age,
And, sowing music, made high heritage
For generations far beyond the Flood —
For the poor late-begotten human brood
Born to life's weary brevity and perilous good.

And ever as he travelled he would climb
The farthest mountain, yet the heavenly chime,
The mighty tolling of the far-off spheres
Beating their pathway, never touched his ears.
But wheresoe'er he rose the heavens rose,
And the far-gazing mountain could disclose
Naught but a wider earth; until one height
Showed him the ocean stretched in liquid light,
And he could hear its multitudinous roar,
Its plunge and hiss upon the pebbled shore:
Then Jubal silent sat, and touched his lyre no more.

He thought, "The world is great, but I am weak,
And where the sky bends is no solid peak
To give me footing, but instead, this main —
Myriads of maddened horses thundering o'er the plain.

"New voices come to me where'er I roam,
My heart too widens with its widening home:
But song grows weaker, and the heart must break
For lack of voice, or fingers that can wake
The lyre's full answer; nay, its chords were all
Too few to meet the growing spirit's call.

The former songs seem little, yet no more
Can soul, hand, voice, with interchanging lore
Tell what the earth is saying unto me:
The secret is too great, I hear confusedly.

"No farther will I travel: once again
My brethren I will see, and that fair plain
Where I and Song were born. There fresh-voiced youth
Will pour my strains with all the early truth
Which now abides not in my voice and hands,
But only in the soul, the will that stands
Helpless to move. My tribe remembering
Will cry 'T is he!' and run to greet me, welcoming."

The way was weary. Many a date-palm grew,
And shook out clustered gold against the blue,
While Jubal, guided by the steadfast spheres,
Sought the dear home of those first eager years,
When, with fresh vision fed, the fuller will
Took living outward shape in pliant skill;
For still he hoped to find the former things,
And the warm gladness recognition brings.
His footsteps erred among the mazy woods
And long illusive sameness of the floods,
Winding and wandering. Through far regions, strange
With Gentile homes and faces, did he range,
And left his music in their memory,
And left at last, when naught besides would free
His homeward steps from clinging hands and cries,
The ancient lyre. And now in ignorant eyes
No sign remained of Jubal, Lamech's son,
That mortal frame wherein was first begun
The immortal life of song. His withered brow
Pressed over eyes that held no lightning now,
His locks streamed whiteness on the hurrying air,

The unresting soul had worn itself quite bare
Of beauteous token, as the outworn might
Of oaks slow dying, gaunt in summer's light.
His full deep voice toward thinnest treble ran:
He was the rune-writ story of a man.

And so at last he neared the well-known land,
Could see the hills in ancient order stand
With friendly faces whose familiar gaze
Looked through the sunshine of his childish days;
Knew the deep-shadowed folds of hanging woods,
And seemed to see the selfsame insect broods
Whirling and quivering o'er the flowers — to hear
The selfsame cuckoo making distance near.
Yea, the dear Earth, with mother's constancy,
Met and embraced him, and said, "Thou art he!
This was thy cradle, here my breast was thine,
Where feeding, thou didst all thy life entwine
With my sky-wedded life in heritage divine."

But wending ever through the watered plain,
Firm not to rest save in the home of Cain,
He saw dread Change, with dubious face and cold
That never kept a welcome for the old,
Like some strange heir upon the hearth, arise
Saying, "This home is mine." He thought his eyes
Mocked all deep memories, as things new made,
Usurping sense, make old things shrink and fade
And seem ashamed to meet the staring day.
His memory saw a small foot-trodden way,
His eyes a broad far-stretching paven road
Bordered with many a tomb and fair abode;
The little city that once nestled low
As buzzing groups about some central glow,
Spread like a murmuring crowd o'er plain and steep,
Or monster huge in heavy-breathing sleep.

His heart grew faint, and tremblingly he sank
Close by the wayside on a weed-grown bank,
Not far from where a new-raised temple stood,
Sky-roofed, and fragrant with wrought cedar wood.
The morning sun was high; his rays fell hot
On this hap-chosen, dusty, common spot,
On the dry-withered grass and withered man:
That wondrous frame where melody began
Lay as a tomb defaced that no eye cared to scan.

But while he sank far music reached his ear.
He listened until wonder silenced fear
And gladness wonder; for the broadening stream
Of sound advancing was his early dream,
Brought like fulfilment of forgotten prayer;
As if his soul, breathed out upon the air,
Had held the invisible seeds of harmony
Quick with the various strains of life to be.
He listened: the sweet mingled difference
With charm alternate took the meeting sense;
Then bursting like some shield-broad lily red,
Sudden and near the trumpet's notes outspread,
And soon his eyes could see the metal flower,
Shining upturned, out on the morning pour
Its incense audible; could see a train
From out the street slow-winding on the plain
With lyres and cymbals, flutes and psalteries,
While men, youths, maids, in concert sang to these
With various throat, or in succession poured,
Or in full volume mingled. But one word
Ruled each recurrent rise and answering fall,
As when the multitudes adoring call
On some great name divine, their common soul,
The common need, love, joy, that knits them in one whole.

The word was "Jubal!" . . . "Jubal" filled the air
And seemed to ride aloft, a spirit there,
Creator of the quire, the full-fraught strain
That grateful rolled itself to him again.
The aged man adust upon the bank —
Whom no eye saw — at first with rapture drank
The bliss of music, then, with swelling heart,
Felt, this was his own being's greater part,
The universal joy once born in him.
But when the train, with living face and limb
And vocal breath, came nearer and more near,
The longing grew that they should hold him dear;
Him, Lamech's son, whom all their fathers knew,
The breathing Jubal — him, to whom their love was due
All was forgotten but the burning need
To claim his fuller self, to claim the deed
That lived away from him, and grew apart,
While he as from a tomb, with lonely heart,
Warmed by no meeting glance, no hand that pressed,
Lay chill amid the life his life had blessed.
What though his song should spread from man's small race
Out through the myriad worlds that people space,
And make the heavens one joy-diffusing quire? —
Still 'mid that vast would throb the keen desire
Of this poor aged flesh, this eventide,
This twilight soon in darkness to subside,
This little pulse of self that, having glowed
Through thrice three centuries, and divinely strowed
The light of music through the vague of sound,
Ached with its smallness still in good that had no bound.

For no eye saw him, while with loving pride
Each voice with each in praise of Jubal vied.

Must he in conscious trance, dumb, helpless lie
While all that ardent kindred passed him by?
His flesh cried out to live with living men
And join that soul which to the inward ken
Of all the hymning train was present there.
Strong passion's daring sees not aught to dare:
The frost-locked starkness of his frame low-bent,
His voice's penury of tones long spent,
He felt not; all his being leaped in flame
To meet his kindred as they onward came
Slackening and wheeling toward the temple's face;
He rushed before them to the glittering space,
And, with a strength that was but strong desire,
Cried, "I am Jubal, I! . . . I made the lyre!"

The tones amid a lake of silence fell
Broken and strained, as if a feeble bell
Had tuneless pealed the triumph of a land
To listening crowds in expectation spanned.
Sudden came showers of laughter on that lake;
They spread along the train from front to wake
In one great storm of merriment, while he
Shrank doubting whether he could Jubal be,
And not a dream of Jubal, whose rich vein
Of passionate music came with that dream-pain
Wherein the sense slips off from each loved thing
And all appearance is mere vanishing.
But ere the laughter died from out the rear,
Anger in front saw profanation near;
Jubal was but a name in each man's faith
For glorious power untouched by that slow death
Which creeps with creeping time; this too, the spot,
And this the day, it must be crime to blot,
Even with scoffing at a madman's lie:
Jubal was not a name to wed with mockery.

Two rushed upon him: two, the most devout
In honor of great Jubal, thrust him out,
And beat him with their flutes. 'T was little need;
He strove not, cried not, but with tottering speed,
As if the scorn and howls were driving wind
That urged his body, serving so the mind
Which could but shrink and yearn, he sought the screen
Of thorny thickets, and there fell unseen.
The immortal name of Jubal filled the sky,
While Jubal lonely laid him down to die.
He said within his soul, "This is the end:
O'er all the earth to where the heavens bend
And hem men's travel, I have breathed my soul:
I lie here now the remnant of that whole,
The embers of a life, a lonely pain;
As far-off rivers to my thirst were vain,
So of my mighty years naught comes to me again.

"Is the day sinking? Softest coolness springs
From something round me: dewy shadowy wings
Enclose me all around — no, not above —
Is moonlight there? I see a face of love,
Fair as sweet music when my heart was strong:
Yea — art thou come again to me, great Song?"

The face bent over him like silver night
In long-remembered summers; that calm light
Of days which shine in firmaments of thought,
That past unchangeable, from change still wrought.
And gentlest tones were with the vision blent:
He knew not if that gaze the music sent,
Or music that calm gaze: to hear, to see,
Was but one undivided ecstasy:
The raptured senses melted into one,
And parting life a moment's freedom won



"He sought the screen
Of thorny thickets, and there fell unseen."

From in and outer, as a little child
Sits on a bank and sees blue heavens mild
Down in the water, and forgets its limbs,
And knoweth naught save the blue heaven that swims.

"Jubal," the face said, "I am thy loved Past,
The soul that makes thee one from first to last.
I am the angel of thy life and death,
Thy outbreathed being drawing its last breath.
Am I not thine alone, a dear dead bride
Who blest thy lot above all men's beside?
Thy bride whom thou wouldst never change, nor take
Any bride living, for that dead one's sake?
Was I not all thy yearning and delight,
Thy chosen search, thy senses' beauteous Right,
Which still had been the hunger of thy frame
In central heaven, hadst thou been still the same?
Wouldst thou have asked aught else from any god —
Whether with gleaming feet on earth he trod
Or thundered through the skies — aught else for share
Of mortal good, than in thy soul to bear
The growth of song, and feel the sweet unrest
Of the world's spring-tide in thy conscious breast?
No, thou hadst grasped thy lot with all its pain,
Nor loosed it any painless lot to gain
Where music's voice was silent; for thy fate
Was human music's self incorporate:
Thy senses' keenness and thy passionate strife
Were flesh of *her* flesh and her womb of life.
And greatly hast thou lived, for not alone
With hidden raptures were her secrets shown,
Buried within thee, as the purple light
Of gems may sleep in solitary night;
But thy expanding joy was still to give,
And with the generous air in song to live,

Feeding the wave of ever-widening bliss
Where fellowship means equal perfectness.
And on the mountains in thy wandering
Thy feet were beautiful as blossomed spring,
That turns the leafless wood to love's glad home,
For with thy coming Melody was come.
This was thy lot, to feel, create, bestow,
And that immeasurable life to know
From which the fleshly self falls shrivelled, dead,
A seed primeval that has forests bred.
It is the glory of the heritage
Thy life has left, that makes thy outcast age:
Thy limbs shall lie dark, tombless on this sod,
Because thou shinest in man's soul, a god,
Who found and gave new passion and new joy
That naught but Earth's destruction can destroy.
Thy gifts to give was thine of men alone:
'T was but in giving that thou couldst atone
For too much wealth amid their poverty."

The words seemed melting into symphony,
The wings upbore him, and the gazing song
Was floating him the heavenly space along,
Where mighty harmonies all gently fell
Through veiling vastness, like the far-off bell,
Till, ever onward through the choral blue,
He heard more faintly and more faintly knew,
Quitting mortality, a quenched sun-wave,
The All-creating Presence for his grave.

1869.

AGATHA.

COME with me to the mountain, not where rocks
Soar harsh above the troops of hurrying pines,
But where the earth spreads soft and rounded breasts
To feed her children; where the generous hills
Lift a green isle betwixt the sky and plain
To keep some Old World things aloof from change.
Here too 't is hill and hollow: new-born streams
With sweet enforcement, joyously compelled
Like laughing children, hurry down the steeps,
And make a dimpled chase athwart the stones;
Pine woods are black upon the heights, the slopes
Are green with pasture, and the bearded corn
Fringes the blue above the sudden ridge:
A little world whose round horizon cuts
This isle of hills with heaven for a sea,
Save in clear moments when southwestward gleams
France by the Rhine, melting anon to haze.
The monks of old chose here their still retreat,
And called it by the Blessed Virgin's name,
Sancta Maria, which the peasant's tongue,
Speaking from out the parent's heart that turns
All loved things into little things, has made
Sanct Märgen — Holy little Mary, dear
As all the sweet home things she smiles upon,
The children and the cows, the apple-trees,
The cart, the plough, all named with that caress
Which feigns them little, easy to be held,
Familiar to the eyes and hand and heart.
What though a Queen? She puts her crown away

And with her little Boy wears common clothes,
Caring for common wants, remembering
That day when good Saint Joseph left his work
To marry her with humble trust sublime.
The monks are gone, their shadows fall no more
Tall-frocked and cowled athwart the evening fields
At milking-time; their silent corridors
Are turned to homes of bare-armed, aproned men,
Who toil for wife and children. But the bells,
Pealing on high from two quaint convent towers,
Still ring the Catholic signals, summoning
To grave remembrance of the larger life
That bears our own, like perishable fruit
Upon its heaven-wide branches. At their sound
The shepherd boy far off upon the hill,
The workers with the saw and at the forge,
The triple generation round the hearth —
Grandames and mothers and the flute-voiced girls —
Fall on their knees and send forth prayerful cries
To the kind Mother with the little Boy,
Who pleads for helpless men against the storm,
Lightning and plagues and all terrific shapes
Of power supreme.
Within the prettiest hollow of these hills,
Just as you enter it, upon the slope
Stands a low cottage neighbored cheerily
By running water, which, at farthest end
Of the same hollow, turns a heavy mill,
And feeds the pasture for the miller's cows,
Blanchi and Nägeli, Veilchen and the rest,
Matrons with faces as Griselda mild,
Coming at call. And on the farthest height
A little tower looks out above the pines
Where mounting you will find a sanctuary
Open and still; without, the silent crowd

Of heaven-planted, incense-mingling flowers;
Within, the altar where the Mother sits
'Mid votive tablets hung from far-off years
By peasants succored in the peril of fire,
Fever, or flood, who thought that Mary's love,
Willing but not omnipotent, had stood
Between their lives and that dread power which slew
Their neighbor at their side. The chapel bell
Will melt to gentlest music ere it reach
That cottage on the slope, whose garden gate
Has caught the rose-tree boughs and stands ajar;
So does the door, to let the sunbeams in;
For in the slanting sunbeams angels come
And visit Agatha who dwells within —
Old Agatha, whose cousins Kate and Nell
Are housed by her in Love and Duty's name,
They being feeble, with small withered wits,
And she believing that the higher gift
Was given to be shared. So Agatha
Shares her one room, all neat on afternoons,
As if some memory were sacred there
And everything within the four low walls
An honored relic.

One long summer's day
An angel entered at the rose-hung gate,
With skirts pale blue, a brow to quench the pearl,
Hair soft and blonde as infants', plenteous
As hers who made the wavy lengths once speak
The grateful worship of a rescued soul.
The angel paused before the open door
To give good day. "Come in," said Agatha.
I followed close, and watched and listened there.
The angel was a lady, noble, young,
Taught in all seemliness that fits a court,

All lore that shapes the mind to delicate use,
Yet quiet, lowly, as a meek white dove
That with its presence teaches gentleness.
Men called her Countess Linda; little girls
In Freiburg town, orphans whom she caressed,
Said Mamma Linda: yet her years were few,
Her outward beauties all in budding time,
Her virtues the aroma of the plant
That dwells in all its being, root, stem, leaf,
And waits not ripeness.

"Sit," said Agatha.
Her cousins were at work in neighboring homes
But yet she was not lonely; all things round
Seemed filled with noiseless yet responsive life,
As of a child at breast that gently clings:
Not sunlight only or the breathing flowers
Or the swift shadows of the birds and bees,
But all the household goods, which, polished fair
By hands that cherished them for service done,
Shone as with glad content. The wooden beams
Dark and yet friendly, easy to be reached,
Bore three white crosses for a speaking sign;
The walls had little pictures hung a-row,
Telling the stories of Saint Ursula,
And Saint Elizabeth, the lowly queen;
And on the bench that served for table too,
Skirting the wall to save the narrow space,
There lay the Catholic books, inherited
From those old times when printing still was young
With stout-limbed promise, like a sturdy boy.
And in the farthest corner stood the bed
Where o'er the pillow hung two pictures wreathed
With fresh-plucked ivy: one the Virgin's death,
And one her flowering tomb, while high above

She smiling bends and lets her girdle down
For ladder to the soul that cannot trust
In life which outlasts burial. Agatha
Sat at her knitting, aged, upright, slim,
And spoke her welcome with mild dignity.
She kept the company of kings and queens
And mitred saints who sat below the feet
Of Francis with the ragged frock and wounds;
And Rank for her meant Duty, various,
Yet equal in its worth, done worthily.
Command was service; humblest service done
By willing and discerning soul was glory.
Fair Countess Linda sat upon the bench,
Close fronting the old knitter, and they talked
With sweet antiphony of young and old.

AGATHA.

You like our valley, lady? I am glad
You thought it well to come again. But rest —
The walk is long from Master Michael's inn.

COUNTESS LINDA.

Yes, but no walk is prettier.

AGATHA.

It is true:
There lacks no blessing here, the waters all
Have virtues like the garments of the Lord,
And heal much sickness; then, the crops and cows
Flourish past speaking, and the garden flowers,
Pink, blue, and purple, 't is a joy to see
How they yield honey for the singing bees.
I would the whole world were as good a home.

COUNTESS LINDA.

And you are well off, Agatha? — your friends
Left you a certain bread: is it not so?

AGATHA.

Not so at all, dear lady. I had naught,
Was a poor orphan; but I came to tend
Here in this house, an old afflicted pair,
Who wore out slowly; and the last who died,
Full thirty years ago, left me this roof
And all the household stuff. It was great wealth,
And so I had a home for Kate and Nell.

COUNTESS LINDA.

But how, then, have you earned your daily bread
These thirty years?

AGATHA.

Oh, that is easy earning.
We help the neighbors, and our bit and sup
Is never failing: they have work for us
In house and field, all sorts of odds and ends,
Patching and mending, turning o'er the hay,
Holding sick children — there is always work;
And they are very good — the neighbors are:
Weigh not our bits of work with weight and scale,
But glad themselves with giving us good shares
Of meat and drink; and in the big farmhouse
When cloth comes home from weaving, the good wife
Cuts me a piece — this very gown — and says:
"Here, Agatha, you old maid, you have time
To pray for Hans who is gone soldiering:
The saints might help him, and they have much to do,
'T were well they were besought to think of him."
She spoke half jesting, but I pray, I pray
For poor young Hans. I take it much to heart
That other people are worse off than I —
I ease my soul with praying for them all.

COUNTESS LINDA.

That is your way of singing, Agatha;
Just as the nightingales pour forth sad songs,
And when they reach men's ears they make men's hearts
Feel the more kindly.

AGATHA.

Nay, I cannot sing:
My voice is hoarse, and oft I think my prayers
Are foolish, feeble things; for Christ is good
Whether I pray or not — the Virgin's heart
Is kinder far than mine; and then I stop
And feel I can do naught toward helping men,
Till out it comes, like tears that will not hold,
And I must pray again for all the world.
'T is good to me — I mean the neighbors are:
To Kate and Nell too. I have money saved
To go on pilgrimage the second time.

COUNTESS LINDA.

And do you mean to go on pilgrimage
With all your years to carry, Agatha?

AGATHA.

The years are light, dear lady: 't is my sins
Are heavier than I would. And I shall go
All the way to Einsiedeln with that load:
I need to work it off.

COUNTESS LINDA.

What sort of sins,
Dear Agatha? I think they must be small.

AGATHA.

Nay, but they may be greater than I know;
'T is but dim light I see by. So I try

All ways I know of to be cleansed and pure.
I would not sink where evil spirits are.
There 's perfect goodness somewhere: so I strive.

COUNTESS LINDA.

You were the better for that pilgrimage
You made before? The shrine is beautiful;
And then you saw fresh country all the way.

AGATHA.

Yes, that is true. And ever since that time
The world seems greater, and the Holy Church
More wonderful. The blessed pictures all,
The heavenly images with books and wings,
Are company to me through the day and night.
The time! the time! It never seemed far back,
Only to father's father and his kin
That lived before him. But the time stretched out
After that pilgrimage: I seemed to see
Far back, and yet I knew time lay behind,
As there are countries lying still behind
The highest mountains, there in Switzerland.
Oh, it is great to go on pilgrimage!

COUNTESS LINDA.

Perhaps some neighbors will be pilgrims too,
And you can start together in a band.

AGATHA.

Not from these hills: people are busy here,
The beasts want tendance. One who is not missed
Can go and pray for others who must work.
I owe it to all neighbors, young and old;
For they are good past thinking — lads and girls
Given to mischief, merry naughtiness,
Quiet it, as the hedgehogs smooth their spines.

For fear of hurting poor old Agatha.
'T is pretty: why, the cherubs in the sky
Look young and merry, and the angels play
On citherns, lutes, and all sweet instruments.
I would have young things merry. See the Lord!
A little baby playing with the birds;
And how the Blessed Mother smiles at him.

COUNTESS LINDA.

I think you are too happy, Agatha,
To care for heaven. Earth contents you well.

AGATHA.

Nay, nay, I shall be called, and I shall go
Right willingly. I shall get helpless, blind,
Be like an old stalk to be plucked away:
The garden must be cleared for young spring plants
'T is home beyond the grave, the most are there,
All those we pray to, all the Church's lights —
And poor old souls are welcome in their rags:
One sees it by the pictures. Good Saint Ann,
The Virgin's mother, she is very old,
And had her troubles with her husband too.
Poor Kate and Nell are younger far than I,
But they will have this roof to cover them.
I shall go willingly; and willingness
Makes the yoke easy and the burden light.

COUNTESS LINDA.

When you go southward in your pilgrimage,
Come to see me in Freiburg, Agatha.
Where you have friends you should not go to inns.

AGATHA.

Yes, I will gladly come to see you, lady,
And you will give me sweet hay for a bed.

And in the morning I shall wake betimes
And start when all the birds begin to sing.

COUNTESS LINDA.

You wear your smart clothes on the pilgrimage,
Such pretty clothes as all the women here
Keep by them for their best: a velvet cap
And collar golden-broidered? They look well
On old and young alike.

AGATHA.

Nay, I have none —
Never had better clothes than these you see.
Good clothes are pretty, but one sees them best
When others wear them, and I somehow thought
'T was not worth while. I had so many things
More than some neighbors, I was partly shy
Of wearing better clothes than they, and now
I am so old and custom is so strong
'T would hurt me sore to put on finery.

COUNTESS LINDA.

Your gray hair is a crown, dear Agatha.
Shake hands; good-by. The sun is going down,
And I must see the glory from the hill.

I stayed among those hills; and oft heard more
Of Agatha. I liked to hear her name,
As that of one half grandame and half saint,
Uttered with reverent playfulness. The lads
And younger men all called her mother, aunt,
Or granny, with their pet diminutives,
And bade their lasses and their brides behave
Right well to one who surely made a link
'Twixt faulty folk and God by loving both:

Not one but counted service done by her,
Asking no pay save just her daily bread.
At feasts and weddings, when they passed in groups
Along the vale, and the good country wine,
Being vocal in them, made them quire along
In quaintly mingled mirth and piety,
They fain must jest and play some friendly trick
On three old maids; but when the moment came
Always they bated breath and made their sport
Gentle as feather-stroke, that Agatha
Might like the waking for the love it showed.
Their song made happy music 'mid the hills,
For nature tuned their race to harmony,
And poet Hans, the tailor, wrote them songs
That grew from out their life, as crocuses
From out the meadow's moistness. 'T was his song
They oft sang, wending homeward from a feast —
The song I give you. It brings in, you see,
Their gentle jesting with the three old maids.

Midnight by the chapel bell!
Homeward, homeward all, farewell!
I with you, and you with me,
Miles are short with company.
Heart of Mary, bless the way,
Keep us all by night and day!

Moon and stars at feast with night
Now have drunk their fill of light.
Home they hurry, making time
Trot apace, like merry rhyme.
Heart of Mary, mystic rose,
Send us all a sweet repose!

Swiftly through the wood down hill,
Run till you can hear the mill.
Toni's ghost is wandering now,
Shaped just like a snow-white cow.
Heart of Mary, morning star,
Ward off danger, near or far!

Toni's wagon with its load
Fell and crushed him in the road
'Twixt these pine-trees. Never fear!
Give a neighbor's ghost good cheer.
Holy Babe, our God and Brother,
Bind us fast to one another!

Hark! the mill is at its work,
Now we pass beyond the murk
To the hollow, where the moon
Makes her silvery afternoon.
Good Saint Joseph, faithful spouse,
Help us all to keep our vows!

Here the three old maidens dwell,
Agatha and Kate and Nell;
See, the moon shines on the thatch,
We will go and shake the latch.
Heart of Mary, cup of joy,
Give us mirth without alloy!

Hush, 't is here, no noise, sing low,
Rap with gentle knuckles — so!
Like the little tapping birds,
On the door; then sing good words.
Meek Saint Anna, old and fair,
Hallow all the snow-white hair!

Little maidens old, sweet dreams!
Sleep one sleep till morning beams.
Mothers ye, who help us all,
Quick at hand, if ill befall.
Holy Gabriel, lily-laden,
Bless the aged mother-maiden!

Forward, mount the broad hillside
Swift as soldiers when they ride.
See the two towers how they peep,
Round-capped giants, o'er the steep.
Heart of Mary, by thy sorrow,
Keep us upright through the morrow!

Now they rise quite suddenly
Like a man from bended knee,
Now Saint Märgen is in sight,
Here the roads branch off — good-night.
Heart of Mary, by thy grace,
Give us with the saints a place!

ARMGART.

SCENE I.

A Salon lit with lamps and ornamented with green plants. An open piano, with many scattered sheets of music. Bronze busts of Beethoven and Gluck on pillars opposite each other. A small table spread with supper. To FRÄULEIN WALPURGA, *who advances with a slight lameness of gait from an adjoining room, enters* GRAF DORNBERG *at the opposite door in a travelling dress.*

GRAF.

Good-morning, Fräulein!

WALPURGA.

What, so soon returned?
I feared your mission kept you still at Prague.

GRAF.

But now arrived! You see my travelling dress.
I hurried from the panting, roaring steam
Like any courier of embassy
Who hides the fiends of war within his bag.

WALPURGA.

You know that Armgart sings to-night?

GRAF.

Has sung!
'T is close on half-past nine. The *Orpheus*

Lasts not so long. Her spirits — were they high?
Was Leo confident?

WALPURGA.

He only feared
Some tameness at beginning. Let the house
Once ring, he said, with plaudits, she is safe.

GRAF.

And Armgart?

WALPURGA.

She was stiller than her wont.
But once, at some such trivial word of mine,
As that the highest prize might yet be won
By her who took the second — she was roused.
"For me," she said, "I triumph or I fail.
I never strove for any second prize."

GRAF.

Poor human-hearted singing-bird! She bears
Cæsar's ambition in her delicate breast,
And naught to still it with but quivering song!

WALPURGA.

I had not for the world been there to-night:
Unreasonable dread oft chills me more
Than any reasonable hope can warm.

GRAF.

You have a rare affection for your cousin;
As tender as a sister's.

WALPURGA.

Nay, I fear
My love is little more than what I felt

For happy stories when I was a child.
She fills my life that would be empty else,
And lifts my naught to value by her side.

GRAF.

She is reason good enough, or seems to be,
Why all were born whose being ministers
To her completeness. Is it most her voice
Subdues us? or her instinct exquisite,
Informing each old strain with some new grace
Which takes our sense like any natural good?
Or most her spiritual energy
That sweeps us in the current of her song?

WALPURGA.

I know not. Losing either, we should lose
That whole we call our Armgart. For herself,
She often wonders what her life had been
Without that voice for channel to her soul.
She says, it must have leaped through all her limbs —
Made her a Mænad — made her snatch a brand
And fire some forest, that her rage might mount
In crashing roaring flames through half a land,
Leaving her still and patient for a while.
"Poor wretch!" she says, of any murderess —
"The world was cruel, and she could not sing:
I carry my revenges in my throat;
I love in singing, and am loved again."

GRAF.

Mere mood! I cannot yet believe it more.
Too much ambition has unwomaned her;
But only for a while. Her nature hides
One half its treasures by its very wealth,
Taxing the hours to show it.

WALPURGA.

Hark! she comes.

(*Enter* LEO *with a wreath in his hand, holding the door open for* ARMGART, *who wears a furred mantle and hood. She is followed by her maid, carrying an armful of bouquets.*)

LEO.

Place for the queen of song!

GRAF (*advancing toward* ARMGART, *who throws off her hood and mantle, and shows a star of brilliants in her hair*).

A triumph, then.
You will not be a niggard of your joy
And chide the eagerness that came to share it.

ARMGART.

O kind! you hastened your return for me.
I would you had been there to hear me sing!
Walpurga, kiss me: never tremble more
Lest Armgart's wing should fail her. She has found
This night the region where her rapture breathes —
Pouring her passion on the air made live
With human heart-throbs. Tell them, Leo, tell them
How I outsang your hope and made you cry
Because Gluck could not hear me. That was folly!
He sang, not listened: every linkéd note
Was his immortal pulse that stirred in mine,
And all my gladness is but part of him.
Give me the wreath.

(*She crowns the bust of Gluck.*)

LEO (*sardonically*).

Ay, ay, but mark you this:
It was not part of him — that trill you made
In spite of me and reason!

ARMGART.

You were wrong —
Dear Leo, you were wrong: the house was held
As if a storm were listening with delight
And hushed its thunder.

LEO.

Will you ask the house
To teach you singing? Quit your *Orpheus* then,
And sing in farces grown to operas,
Where all the prurience of the full-fed mob
Is tickled with melodic impudence:
Jerk forth burlesque bravuras, square your arms
Akimbo with a tavern wench's grace,
And set the splendid compass of your voice
To lyric jigs. Go to! I thought you meant
To be an artist — lift your audience
To see your vision, not trick forth a show
To please the grossest taste of grossest numbers.

ARMGART (*taking up* LEO's *hand and kissing it*).

Pardon, good Leo, I am penitent.
I will do penance: sing a hundred trills
Into a deep-dug grave, then burying them
As one did Midas' secret, rid myself
Of naughty exultation. Oh I trilled
At nature's prompting, like the nightingales.
Go scold them, dearest Leo.

LEO.

I stop my ears.
Nature in Gluck inspiring Orpheus,
Has done with nightingales. Are bird-beaks lips?

GRAF.

Truce to rebukes! Tell us — who were not there —
The double drama: how the expectant house
Took the first notes.

WALPURGA (*turning from her occupation of decking the room with the flowers*).

Yes, tell us all, dear Armgart.
Did you feel tremors? Leo, how did she look?
Was there a cheer to greet her?

LEO.

Not a sound.
She walked like Orpheus in his solitude,
And seemed to see naught but what no man saw.
'T was famous. Not the Schroeder-Devrient
Had done it better. But your blessed public
Had never any judgment in cold blood —
Thinks all perhaps were better otherwise,
Till rapture brings a reason.

ARMGART (*scornfully*).

I knew that!
The women whispered, "Not a pretty face!"
The men, "Well, well, a goodly length of limb:
She bears the chiton." — It were all the same
Were I the Virgin Mother and my stage
The opening heavens at the Judgment-day:
Gossips would peep, jog elbows, rate the price
Of such a woman in the social mart.
What were the drama of the world to them,
Unless they felt the hell-prong?

LEO.

Peace, now, peace!
I hate my phrases to be smothered o'er
With sauce of paraphrase, my sober tune
Made bass to rambling trebles, showering down
In endless demi-semi-quavers.

ARMGART (*taking a bon-bon from the table, uplifting it before putting it into her mouth, and turning away*). Mum!

GRAF.

Yes, tell us all the glory, leave the blame.

WALPURGA.

You first, dear Leo — what you saw and heard;
Then Armgart — she must tell us what she felt.

LEO.

Well! The first notes came clearly, firmly forth.
And I was easy, for behind those rills
I knew there was a fountain. I could see
The house was breathing gently, heads were still;
Parrot opinion was struck meekly mute,
And human hearts were swelling. Armgart stood
As if she had been new-created there
And found her voice which found a melody.
The minx! Gluck had not written, nor I taught:
Orpheus was Armgart, Armgart Orpheus.
Well, well, all through the *scena* I could feel
The silence tremble now, now poise itself
With added weight of feeling, till at last
Delight o'er-toppled it. The final note
Had happy drowning in the unloosed roar
That surged and ebbed and ever surged again,
Till expectation kept it pent awhile
Ere Orpheus returned. Pfui! He was changed:
My demi-god was pale, had downcast eyes
That quivered like a bride's who fain would send
Backward the rising tear.

ARMGART (*advancing, but then turning away, as if to check her speech*).

I *was* a bride,
As nuns are at their spousals.

LEO.

Ay, my lady,
That moment will not come again: applause
May come and plenty; but the first, first draught!
(*Snaps his fingers.*)
Music has sounds for it—I know no words.
I felt it once myself when they performed
My overture to Sintram. Well! 't is strange,
We know not pain from pleasure in such joy.

ARMGART (*turning quickly*).

Oh, pleasure has cramped dwelling in our souls,
And when full Being comes must call on pain
To lend it liberal space.

WALPURGA.

I hope the house
Kept a reserve of plaudits: I am jealous
Lest they had dulled themselves for coming good
That should have seemed the better and the best.

LEO.

No, 't was a revel where they had but quaffed
Their opening cup. I thank the artist's star,
His audience keeps not sober: once afire,
They flame toward climax though his merit hold
But fairly even.

ARMGART (*her hand on* LEO'S *arm*).

Now, now, confess the truth:
I sang still better to the very end—

All save the trill; I give that up to you,
To bite and growl at. Why, you said yourself,
Each time I sang, it seemed new doors were oped
That you might hear heaven clearer.

LEO (*shaking his finger*).

I was raving.

ARMGART.

I am not glad with that mean vanity
Which knows no good beyond its appetite
Full feasting upon praise! I am only glad,
Being praised for what I know is worth the praise;
Glad of the proof that I myself have part
In what I worship! At the last applause —
Seeming a roar of tropic winds that tossed
The handkerchiefs and many-colored flowers,
Falling like shattered rainbows all around —
Think you I felt myself a *prima donna?*
No, but a happy spiritual star
Such as old Dante saw, wrought in a rose
Of light in Paradise, whose only self
Was consciousness of glory wide-diffused,
Music, life, power — I moving in the midst
With a sublime necessity of good.

LEO (*with a shrug*).

I thought it was a *prima donna* came
Within the side-scenes; ay, and she was proud
To find the bouquet from the royal box
Enclosed a jewel-case, and proud to wear
A star of brilliants, quite an earthly star,
Valued by thalers. Come, my lady, own
Ambition has five senses, and a self
That gives it good warm lodging when it sinks
Plump down from ecstasy.

ARMGART.

Own it? why not?
Am I a sage whose words must fall like seed
Silently buried toward a far-off spring?
I sing to living men and my effect
Is like the summer's sun, that ripens corn
Or now or never. If the world brings me gifts,
Gold, incense, myrrh — 't will be the needful sign
That I have stirred it as the high year stirs
Before I sink to winter.

GRAF.

Ecstasies
Are short — most happily! We should but lose
Were Armgart borne too commonly and long
Out of the self that charms us. Could I choose,
She were less apt to soar beyond the reach
Of woman's foibles, innocent vanities,
Fondness for trifles like that pretty star
Twinkling beside her cloud of ebon hair.

ARMGART (*taking out the gem and looking at it*).

This little star! I would it were the seed
Of a whole Milky Way, if such bright shimmer
Were the sole speech men told their rapture with
At Armgart's music. Shall I turn aside
From splendors which flash out the glow I make,
And live to make, in all the chosen breasts
Of half a Continent? No, may it come,
That splendor! May the day be near when men
Think much to let my horses draw me home,
And new lands welcome me upon their beach,
Loving me for my fame. That is the truth
Of what I wish, nay, yearn for. Shall I lie?
Pretend to seek obscurity — to sing

In hope of disregard? A vile pretence!
And blasphemy besides. For what is fame
But the benignant strength of One, transformed
To joy of Many? Tributes, plaudits come
As necessary breathing of such joy;
And may they come to me!

GRAF.

The auguries
Point clearly that way. Is it no offence
To wish the eagle's wing may find repose,
As feebler wings do, in a quiet nest?
Or has the taste of fame already turned
The Woman to a Muse . . . .

LEO (*going to the table*).

Who needs no supper.
I am her priest, ready to eat her share
Of good Walpurga's offerings.

WALPURGA.

Armgart, come.
Graf, will you come?

GRAF.

Thanks, I play truant here,
And must retrieve my self-indulged delay.
But will the Muse receive a votary
At any hour to-morrow?

ARMGART.

Any hour
After rehearsal, after twelve at noon.

SCENE II.

The same Salon, morning. ARMGART *seated, in her bonnet and walking-dress. The* GRAF *standing near her against the piano.*

GRAF.

Armgart, to many minds the first success
Is reason for desisting. I have known
A man so versatile, he tried all arts,
But when in each by turns he had achieved
Just so much mastery as made men say,
"He could be king here if he would," he threw
The lauded skill aside. He hates, said one,
The level of achieved pre-eminence,
He must be conquering still; but others said —

ARMGART.

The truth, I hope: he had a meagre soul,
Holding no depth where love could root itself.
"Could if he would?" True greatness ever wills —
It lives in wholeness if it live at all,
And all its strength is knit with constancy.

GRAF.

He used to say himself he was too sane
To give his life away for excellence
Which yet must stand, an ivory statuette
Wrought to perfection through long lonely years,
Huddled in the mart of mediocrities.
He said, the very finest doing wins
The admiring only; but to leave undone,
Promise and not fulfil, like buried youth,
Wins all the envious, makes them sigh your name

As that fair Absent, blameless Possible,
Which could alone impassion them; and thus,
Serene negation has free gift of all,
Panting achievement struggles, is denied,
Or wins to lose again. What say you, Armgart?
Truth has rough flavors if we bite it through;
I think this sarcasm came from out its core
Of bitter irony.

ARMGART.

It is the truth
Mean souls select to feed upon. What then?
Their meanness is a truth, which I will spurn.
The praise I seek lives not in envious breath
Using my name to blight another's deed.
I sing for love of song and that renown
Which is the spreading act, the world-wide share,
Of good that I was born with. Had I failed —
Well, that had been a truth most pitiable.
I cannot bear to think what life would be
With high hope shrunk to endurance, stunted aims
Like broken lances ground to eating-knives,
A self sunk down to look with level eyes
At low achievement, doomed from day to day
To distaste of its consciousness. But I —

GRAF.

Have won, not lost, in your decisive throw.
And I too glory in this issue; yet,
The public verdict has no potency
To sway my judgment of what Armgart is:
My pure delight in her would be but sullied,
If it o'erflowed with mixture of men's praise.
And had she failed, I should have said, "The pearl
Remains a pearl for me, reflects the light

With the same fitness that first charmed my gaze —
Is worth as fine a setting now as then."

ARMGART (*rising*).

Oh, you are good! But why will you rehearse
The talk of cynics, who with insect eyes
Explore the secrets of the rubbish-heap?
I hate your epigrams and pointed saws
Whose narrow truth is but broad falsity.
Confess your friend was shallow.

GRAF.

I confess
Life is not rounded in an epigram,
And saying aught, we leave a world unsaid.
I quoted, merely to shape forth my thought
That high success has terrors when achieved —
Like preternatural spouses whose dire love
Hangs perilous on slight observances:
Whence it were possible that Armgart crowned
Might turn and listen to a pleading voice,
Though Armgart striving in the race was deaf.
You said you dared not think what life had been
Without the stamp of eminence; have you thought
How you will bear the poise of eminence
With dread of sliding? Paint the future out
As an unchecked and glorious career,
'T will grow more strenuous by the very love
You bear to excellence, the very fate
Of human powers, which tread at every step
On possible verges.

ARMGART.

I accept the peril.
I choose to walk high with sublimer dread

Rather than crawl in safety. And, besides,
I am an artist as you are a noble:
I ought to bear the burden of my rank.

GRAF.

Such parallels, dear Armgart, are but snares
To catch the mind with seeming argument —
Small baits of likeness 'mid disparity.
Men rise the higher as their task is high,
The task being well achieved. A woman's rank
Lies in the fulness of her womanhood:
Therein alone she is royal.

ARMGART.

Yes, I know
The oft-taught Gospel: "Woman, thy desire
Shall be that all superlatives on earth
Belong to men, save the one highest kind —
To be a mother. Thou shalt not desire
To do aught best save pure subservience:
Nature has willed it so!" O blessed Nature!
Let her be arbitress; she gave me voice
Such as she only gives a woman child,
Best of its kind, gave me ambition too,
That sense transcendent which can taste the joy
Of swaying multitudes, of being adored
For such achievement, needed excellence,
As man's best art must wait for, or be dumb.
Men did not say, when I had sung last night,
"'T was good, nay, wonderful, considering
She is a woman" — and then turn to add,
"Tenor or baritone had sung her songs
Better, of course: she 's but a woman spoiled."
I beg your pardon, Graf, you said it.

GRAF.

No!
How should I say it, Armgart? I who own
The magic of your nature-given art
As sweetest effluence of your womanhood
Which, being to my choice the best, must find
The best of utterance. But this I say:
Your fervid youth beguiles you; you mistake
A strain of lyric passion for a life
Which in the spending is a chronicle
With ugly pages. Trust me, Armgart, trust me;
Ambition exquisite as yours which soars
Towards something quintessential you call fame,
Is not robust enough for this gross world
Whose fame is dense with false and foolish breath.
Ardor, a-twin with nice refining thought,
Prepares a double pain. Pain had been saved,
Nay, purer glory reached, had you been throned
As woman only, holding all your art
As attribute to that dear sovereignty —
Concentring your power in home delights
Which penetrate and purify the world.

ARMGART.

What! leave the opera with my part ill-sung
While I was warbling in a drawing-room?
Sing in the chimney-corner to inspire
My husband reading news? Let the world hear
My music only in his morning speech
Less stammering than most honorable men's?
No! tell me that my song is poor, my art
The piteous feat of weakness aping strength —
That were fit proem to your argument.
Till then, I am an artist by my birth —
By the same warrant that I am a woman:

Nay, in the added rarer gift I see
Supreme vocation: if a conflict comes,
Perish — no, not the woman, but the joys
Which men make narrow by their narrowness.
Oh, I am happy! The great masters write
For women's voices, and great Music wants me!
I need not crush myself within a mould
Of theory called Nature: I have room
To breathe and grow unstunted.

GRAF.

Armgart, hear me.
I meant not that our talk should hurry on
To such collision. Foresight of the ills
Thick shadowing your path, drew on my speech
Beyond intention. True, I came to ask
A great renunciation, but not this
Toward which my words at first perversely strayed,
As if in memory of their earlier suit,
Forgetful . . . . . .
Armgart, do you remember too? the suit
Had but postponement, was not quite disdained —
Was told to wait and learn — what it has learned —
A more submissive speech.

ARMGART (*with some agitation*).

Then it forgot
Its lesson cruelly. As I remember,
'T was not to speak save to the artist crowned,
Nor speak to her of casting off her crown.

GRAF.

Nor will it, Armgart. I come not to seek
Any renunciation save the wife's,
Which turns away from other possible love
Future and worthier, to take his love

Who asks the name of husband. He who sought
Armgart obscure, and heard her answer, "Wait" —
May come without suspicion now to seek
Armgart applauded.

ARMGART (*turning toward him*).

Yes, without suspicion
Of aught save what consists with faithfulness
In all expressed intent. Forgive me, Graf —
I am ungrateful to no soul that loves me —
To you most grateful. Yet the best intent
Grasps but a living present which may grow
Like any unfledged bird. You are a noble,
And have a high career; just now you said
'T was higher far than aught a woman seeks
Beyond mere womanhood. You claim to be
More than a husband, but could not rejoice
That I were more than wife. What follows, then?
You choosing me with such persistency
As is but stretched-out rashness, soon must find
Our marriage asks concessions, asks resolve
To share renunciation or demand it.
Either we both renounce a mutual ease,
As in a nation's need both man and wife
Do public services, or one of us
Must yield that something else for which each lives
Besides the other. Men are reasoners:
That premise of superior claims perforce
Urges conclusion — "Armgart, it is you."

GRAF.

But if I say I have considered this
With strict prevision, counted all the cost
Which that great good of loving you demands —
Questioned by stores of patience, half resolved

To live resigned without a bliss whose threat
Touched you as well as me — and finally,
With impetus of undivided will
Returned to say, "You shall be free as now;
Only accept the refuge, shelter, guard,
My love will give your freedom" — then your words
Are hard accusal.

ARMGART.

Well, I accuse myself.
My love would be accomplice of your will.

GRAF.

Again — my will?

ARMGART.

Oh, your unspoken will.
Your silent tolerance would torture me,
And on that rack I should deny the good
I yet believed in.

GRAF.

Then I am the man
Whom you would love?

ARMGART.

Whom I refuse to love!
No; I will live alone and pour my pain
With passion into music, where it turns
To what is best within my better self.
I will not take for husband one who deems
The thing my soul acknowledges as good —
The thing I hold worth striving, suffering for,
To be a thing dispensed with easily
Or else the idol of a mind infirm.

GRAF.

Armgart, you are ungenerous; you strain
My thought beyond its mark. Our difference
Lies not so deep as love — as union
Through a mysterious fitness that transcends
Formal agreement.

ARMGART.

It lies deep enough
To chafe the union. If many a man
Refrains, degraded, from the utmost right,
Because the pleadings of his wife's small fears
Are little serpents biting at his heel —
How shall a woman keep her steadfastness
Beneath a frost within her husband's eyes
Where coldness scorches? Graf, it is your sorrow
That you love Armgart. Nay, it is her sorrow
That she may not love you.

GRAF.

Woman, it seems,
Has enviable power to love or not
According to her will.

ARMGART.

She has the will —
I have — who am one woman — not to take
Disloyal pledges that divide her will.
The man who marries me must wed my Art —
Honor and cherish it, not tolerate.

GRAF.

The man is yet to come whose theory
Will weigh as naught with you against his love.

ARMGART.

Whose theory will plead beside his love.

GRAF.

Himself a singer, then? who knows no life
Out of the opera books, where tenor parts
Are found to suit him?

ARMGART.

You are bitter, Graf.
Forgive me; seek the woman you deserve,
All grace, all goodness, who has not yet found
A meaning in her life, nor any end
Beyond fulfilling yours. The type abounds.

GRAF.

And happily, for the world.

ARMGART.

Yes, happily.
Let it excuse me that my kind is rare:
Commonness is its own security.

GRAF.

Armgart, I would with all my soul I knew
The man so rare that he could make your life
As woman sweet to you, as artist safe.

ARMGART.

Oh, I can live unmated, but not live
Without the bliss of singing to the world,
And feeling all my world respond to me.

GRAF.

May it be lasting. Then, we two must part?

ARMGART.

I thank you from my heart for all. Farewell!

SCENE III.

A YEAR LATER.

The same salon. WALPURGA *is standing looking toward the window with an air of uneasiness.* DOCTOR GRAHN.

DOCTOR.

Where is my patient, Fräulein?

WALPURGA.

Fled! escaped!
Gone to rehearsal. Is it dangerous?

DOCTOR.

No, no; her throat is cured. I only came
To hear her try her voice. Had she yet sung?

WALPURGA.

No; she had meant to wait for you. She said,
"The Doctor has a right to my first song."
Her gratitude was full of little plans,
But all were swept away like gathered flowers
By sudden storm. She saw this opera bill —
It was a wasp to sting her: she turned pale,
Snatched up her hat and mufflers, said in haste,
"I go to Leo — to rehearsal — none
Shall sing Fidelio to-night but me!"
Then rushed down-stairs.

DOCTOR (*looking at his watch*).

And this, not long ago?

WALPURGA.

Barely an hour.

DOCTOR.

I will come again,
Returning from Charlottenburg at one.

WALPURGA.

Doctor, I feel a strange presentiment.
Are you quite easy?

DOCTOR.

She can take no harm.
'T was time for her to sing: her throat is well,
It was a fierce attack, and dangerous;
I had to use strong remedies, but — well!
At one, dear Fräulein, we shall meet again.

SCENE IV.

TWO HOURS LATER.

WALPURGA *starts up, looking toward the door.* ARMGART *enters, followed by* LEO. *She throws herself on a chair which stands with its back toward the door, speechless, not seeming to see anything.* WALPURGA *casts a questioning terrified look at* LEO. *He shrugs his shoulders, and lifts up his hands behind* ARMGART, *who sits like a helpless image, while* WALPURGA *takes off her hat and mantle.*

WALPURGA.

Armgart, dear Armgart (*kneeling and taking her hands*),
only speak to me,



"Armgart, dear Armgart, only speak to me."

Your poor Walpurga. Oh, your hands are cold.
Clasp mine, and warm them! I will kiss them warm.

(ARMGART *looks at her an instant, then draws away her hands, and, turning aside, buries her face against the back of the chair,* WALPURGA *rising and standing near.* DOCTOR GRAHN *enters.*)

DOCTOR.

News! stirring news to-day! wonders come thick.

ARMGART (*starting up at the first sound of his voice, and speaking vehemently*).

Yes, thick, thick, thick! and you have murdered it!
Murdered my voice — poisoned the soul in me,
And kept me living.
You never told me that your cruel cures
Were clogging films — a mouldy, dead'ning blight —
A lava-mud to crust and bury me,
Yet hold me living in a deep, deep tomb,
Crying unheard forever! Oh, your cures
Are devil's triumphs: you can rob, maim, slay,
And keep a hell on the other side your cure
Where you can see your victim quivering
Between the teeth of torture — see a soul
Made keen by loss — all anguish with a good
Once known and gone!

(*Turns and sinks back on her chair.*)

O misery, misery!
You might have killed me, might have let me sleep
After my happy day and wake — not here!
In some new unremembered world — not here,
Where all is faded, flat — a feast broke off —
Banners all meaningless — exulting words
Dull, dull — a drum that lingers in the air
Beating to melody which no man hears.

DOCTOR (*after a moment's silence*).

A sudden check has shaken you, poor child!
All things seem livid, tottering to your sense,
From inward tumult. Stricken by a threat
You see your terrors only. Tell me, Leo:
'T is not such utter loss.

(LEO, *with a shrug, goes quietly out.*)

The freshest bloom
Merely, has left the fruit; the fruit itself ....

ARMGART.

Is ruined, withered, is a thing to hide
Away from scorn or pity. Oh, you stand
And look compassionate now, but when Death came
With mercy in his hands, you hindered him.
I did not choose to live and have your pity.
You never told me, never gave me choice
To die a singer, lightning-struck, unmaimed,
Or live what you would make me with your cures —
A self accursed with consciousness of change,
A mind that lives in naught but members lopped,
A power turned to pain — as meaningless
As letters fallen asunder that once made
A hymn of rapture. Oh, I had meaning once
Like day and sweetest air. What am I now?
The millionth woman in superfluous herds.
Why should I be, do, think? 'T is thistle-seed,
That grows and grows to feed the rubbish-heap.
Leave me alone!

DOCTOR.

Well, I will come again;
Send for me when you will, though but to rate me.
That is medicinal — a letting blood.

ARMGART.

Oh, there is one physician, only one,
Who cures and never spoils. Him I shall send for;
He comes readily.

DOCTOR (*to* WALPURGA).

One word, dear Fräulein.

SCENE V.

ARMGART, WALPURGA.

ARMGART.

Walpurga, have you walked this morning?

WALPURGA.

No.

ARMGART.

Go, then, and walk; I wish to be alone.

WALPURGA.

I will not leave you.

ARMGART.

Will not, at my wish?

WALPURGA.

Will not, because you wish it. Say no more,
But take this draught.

ARMGART.

The Doctor gave it you?
It is an anodyne. Put it away.
He cured me of my voice, and now he wants
To cure me of my vision and resolve —

Drug me to sleep that I may wake again
Without a purpose, abject as the rest
To bear the yoke of life. He shall not cheat me
Of that fresh strength which anguish gives the soul,
The inspiration of revolt, ere rage
Slackens to faltering. Now I see the truth.

WALPURGA (*setting down the glass*).

Then you must see a future in your reach,
With happiness enough to make a dower
For two of modest claims.

ARMGART.

Oh, you intone
That chant of consolation wherewith ease
Makes itself easier in the sight of pain.

WALPURGA.

No; I would not console you, but rebuke.

ARMGART.

That is more bearable. Forgive me, dear.
Say what you will. But now I want to write.

(*She rises and moves toward a table.*)

WALPURGA.

I say then, you are simply fevered, mad;
You cry aloud at horrors that would vanish
If you would change the light, throw into shade
The loss you aggrandize, and let day fall
On good remaining, nay on good refused
Which may be gain now. Did you not reject
A woman's lot more brilliant, as some held,
Than any singer's? It may still be yours.
Graf Dornberg loved you well.

ARMGART.

Not me, not me.
He loved one well who was like me in all
Save in a voice which made that All unlike
As diamond is to charcoal. Oh, a man's love!
Think you he loves a woman's inner self
Aching with loss of loveliness? — as mothers
Cleave to the palpitating pain that dwells
Within their misformed offspring?

WALPURGA.

But the Graf
Chose you as simple Armgart — had preferred
That you should never seek for any fame
But such as matrons have who rear great sons.
And therefore you rejected him; but now —

ARMGART.

Ay, now — now he would see me as I am,
(*She takes up a hand-mirror.*)
Russet and songless as a missel-thrush.
An ordinary girl — a plain brown girl,
Who, if some meaning flash from out her words,
Shocks as a disproportioned thing — a Will
That, like an arm astretch and broken off,
Has naught to hurl — the torso of a soul.
I sang him into love of me: my song
Was consecration, lifted me apart
From the crowd chiselled like me, sister forms,
But empty of divineness. Nay, my charm
Was half that I could win fame yet renounce
A wife with glory possible absorbed
Into her husband's actual.

WALPURGA.

For shame!
Armgart, you slander him. What would you say

If now he came to you and asked again
That you would be his wife?

ARMGART.

No, and thrice no!
It would be pitying constancy, not love,
That brought him to me now. I will not be
A pensioner in marriage. Sacraments
Are not to feed the paupers of the world.
If he were generous — I am generous too.

WALPURGA.

Proud, Armgart, but not generous.

ARMGART.

Say no more.
He will not know until —

WALPURGA.

He knows already.

ARMGART (*quickly*).

Is he come back?

WALPURGA.

Yes, and will soon be here.
The Doctor had twice seen him and would go
From hence again to see him.

ARMGART.

Well, he knows.
It is all one.

WALPURGA.

What if he were outside?
I hear a footstep in the ante-room.

ARMGART (*raising herself and assuming calmness*).

Why let him come, of course. I shall behave
Like what I am, a common personage
Who looks for nothing but civility.
I shall not play the fallen heroine,
Assume a tragic part and throw out cues
For a beseeching lover.

WALPURGA.

Some one raps.

(*Goes to the door.*)

A letter — from the Graf.

ARMGART.

Then open it.

(WALPURGA *still offers it.*)

Nay, my head swims. Read it. I cannot see.

(WALPURGA *opens it, reads and pauses.*)

Read it. Have done! No matter what it is.

WALPURGA (*reads in a low, hesitating voice*).

"I am deeply moved — my heart is rent, to hear of your illness and its cruel result, just now communicated to me by Dr. Grahn. But surely it is possible that this result may not be permanent. For youth such as yours, Time may hold in store something more than resignation: who shall say that it does not hold renewal? I have not dared to ask admission to you in the hours of a recent shock, but I cannot depart on a long mission without tendering my sympathy and my farewell. I start this evening for the Caucasus, and thence I proceed to India, where I am intrusted by the Government with business which may be of long duration."

(WALPURGA *sits down dejectedly.*)

ARMGART (*after a slight shudder, bitterly*).

The Graf has much discretion. I am glad.
He spares us both a pain, not seeing me.
What I like least is that consoling hope —
That empty cup, so neatly ciphered "Time,"
Handed me as a cordial for despair.
(*Slowly and dreamily*) Time — what a word to fling as charity!
Bland neutral word for slow, dull-beating pain —
Days, months, and years! — If I would wait for them.

(*She takes up her hat and puts it on, then wraps her mantle round her.* WALPURGA *leaves the room.*)

Why, this is but beginning. (WALPURGA *re-enters.*) Kiss me, dear.
I am going now — alone — out — for a walk.
Say you will never wound me any more
With such cajolery as nurses use
To patients amorous of a crippled life.
Flatter the blind: I see.

WALPURGA.

Well, I was wrong.
In haste to soothe, I snatched at flickers merely.
Believe me, I will flatter you no more.

ARMGART.

Bear witness, I am calm. I read my lot
As soberly as if it were a tale
Writ by a creeping feuilletonist and called
"The Woman's Lot: a Tale of Everyday:"
A middling woman's, to impress the world
With high superfluousness; her thoughts a crop
Of chick-weed errors or of pot-herb facts,
Smiled at like some child's drawing on a slate.

"Genteel?" "Oh yes, gives lessons; not so good
As any man's would be, but cheaper far."
"Pretty?" "No; yet she makes a figure fit
For good society. Poor thing, she sews
Both late and early, turns and alters all
To suit the changing mode. Some widower
Might do well, marrying her; but in these days!....
Well, she can somewhat eke her narrow gains
By writing, just to furnish her with gloves
And droschkies in the rain. They print her things
Often for charity." — Oh, a dog's life!
A harnessed dog's, that draws a little cart
Voted a nuisance! I am going now.

WALPURGA.

Not now, the door is locked.

ARMGART.

Give me the key!

WALPURGA.

Locked on the outside. Gretchen has the key:
She is gone on errands.

ARMGART.

What, you dare to keep me
Your prisoner?

WALPURGA.

And have I not been yours?
Your wish has been a bolt to keep me in.
Perhaps that middling woman whom you paint
With far-off scorn....

ARMGART.

I paint what I must be!
What is my soul to me without the voice

That gave it freedom? — gave it one grand touch
And made it nobly human? — Prisoned now,
Prisoned in all the petty mimicries
Called woman's knowledge, that will fit the world
As doll-clothes fit a man. I can do naught
Better than what a million women do —
Must drudge among the crowd and feel my life
Beating upon the world without response,
Beating with passion through an insect's horn
That moves a millet-seed laboriously.
If I *would* do it!

WALPURGA (*coldly*).

And why should you not?

ARMGART (*turning quickly*).

Because Heaven made me royal — wrought me out
With subtle finish toward pre-eminence,
Made every channel of my soul converge
To one high function, and then flung me down,
That breaking I might turn to subtlest pain.
An inborn passion gives a rebel's right:
I would rebel and die in twenty worlds
Sooner than bear the yoke of thwarted life,
Each keenest sense turned into keen distaste,
Hunger not satisfied but kept alive
Breathing in languor half a century.
All the world now is but a rack of threads
To twist and dwarf me into pettiness
And basely feigned content, the placid mask
Of women's misery.

WALPURGA (*indignantly*).

Ay, such a mask
As the few born like you to easy joy,

Cradled in privilege, take for natural
On all the lowly faces that must look
Upward to you! What revelation now
Shows you the mask or gives presentiment
Of sadness hidden? You who every day
These five years saw me limp to wait on you,
And thought the order perfect which gave *me*,
The girl without pretension to be aught,
A splendid cousin for my happiness:
To watch the night through when her brain was fired
With too much gladness — listen, always listen
To what *she* felt, who having power had right
To feel exorbitantly, and submerge
The souls around her with the poured-out flood
Of what must be ere she was satisfied!
That was feigned patience, was it? Why not love,
Love nurtured even with that strength of self
Which found no room save in another's life?
Oh, such as I know joy by negatives,
And all their deepest passion is a pang
Till they accept their pauper's heritage,
And meekly live from out the general store
Of joy they were born stripped of. I accept —
Nay, now would sooner choose it than the wealth
Of natures you call royal, who can live
In mere mock knowledge of their fellows' woe,
Thinking their smiles may heal it.

ARMGART (*tremulously*).

Nay, Walpurga,
I did not make a palace of my joy
To shut the world's truth from me. All my good
Was that I touched the world and made a part
In the world's dower of beauty, strength, and bliss:
It was the glimpse of consciousness divine

Which pours out day and sees the day is good.
Now I am fallen dark; I sit in gloom,
Remembering bitterly. Yet you speak truth;
I wearied you, it seems; took all your help
As cushioned nobles use a weary serf,
Not looking at his face.

WALPURGA.

Oh, I but stand
As a small symbol for the mighty sum
Of claims unpaid to needy myriads;
I think you never set your loss beside
That mighty deficit. Is your work gone —
The prouder queenly work that paid itself
And yet was overpaid with men's applause?
Are you no longer chartered, privileged,
But sunk to simple woman's penury,
To ruthless Nature's chary average —
Where is the rebel's right for you alone?
Noble rebellion lifts a common load;
But what is he who flings his own load off
And leaves his fellows toiling? Rebel's right?
Say rather, the deserter's. Oh, you smiled
From your clear height on all the million lots
Which yet you brand as abject.

ARMGART.

I was blind
With too much happiness: true vision comes
Only, it seems, with sorrow. Were there one
This moment near me, suffering what I feel,
And needing me for comfort in her pang —
Then it were worth the while to live; not else.

WALPURGA.

One — near you — why, they throng! you hardly stir
But your act touches them. We touch afar.

For did not swarthy slaves of yesterday
Leap in their bondage at the Hebrews' flight,
Which touched them through the thrice millennial dark?
But you can find the sufferer you need
With touch less subtle.

ARMGART.

Who has need of me?

WALPURGA.

Love finds the need it fills. But you are hard.

ARMGART.

Is it not you, Walpurga, who are hard?
You humored all my wishes till to-day,
When fate has blighted me.

WALPURGA.

You would not hear
The "chant of consolation:" words of hope
Only imbittered you. Then hear the truth —
A lame girl's truth, whom no one ever praised
For being cheerful. "It is well," they said:
"Were she cross-grained she could not be endured."
A word of truth from her had startled you;
But you — you claimed the universe; naught less
Than all existence working in sure tracks
Toward your supremacy. The wheels might scathe
A myriad destinies — nay, must perforce;
But yours they must keep clear of; just for you
The seething atoms through the firmament
Must bear a human heart — which you had not!
For what is it to you that women, men,
Plod, faint, are weary, and espouse despair
Of aught but fellowship? Save that you spurn
To be among them? Now, then, you are lame —

Maimed, as you said, and levelled with the crowd:
Call it new birth — birth from that monstrous Self
Which, smiling down upon a race oppressed,
Says, "All is good, for I am throned at ease."
Dear Armgart — nay, you tremble — I am cruel.

ARMGART.

Oh no! hark! Some one knocks. Come in! — come in!
(*Enter* LEO.)

LEO.

See, Gretchen let me in. I could not rest
Longer away from you.

ARMGART.

Sit down, dear Leo.
Walpurga, I would speak with him alone.
(WALPURGA *goes out.*)

LEO (*hesitatingly*).

You mean to walk?

ARMGART.

No, I shall stay within.
(*She takes off her hat and mantle, and sits down immediately. After a pause, speaking in a subdued tone to* LEO.)
How old are you?

LEO.

Threescore and five.

ARMGART.

That's old.
I never thought till now how you have lived.
They hardly ever play your music?

LEO (*raising his eyebrows and throwing out his lip*).

No!
Schubert too wrote for silence: half his work
Lay like a frozen Rhine till summers came
That warmed the grass above him. Even so!
His music lives now with a mighty youth.

ARMGART.

Do you think yours will live when you are dead?

LEO.

Pfui! The time was, I drank that home-brewed wine
And found it heady, while my blood was young:
Now it scarce warms me. Tipple it as I may,
I am sober still, and say: "My old friend Leo,
Much grain is wasted in the world and rots;
Why not thy handful?"

ARMGART.

Strange! since I have known you
Till now I never wondered how you lived.
When I sang well — that was your jubilee.
But you were old already.

LEO.

Yes, child, yes:
Youth thinks itself the goal of each old life;
Age has but travelled from a far-off time
Just to be ready for youth's service. Well!
It was my chief delight to perfect you.

ARMGART.

Good Leo! You have lived on little joys.
But your delight in me is crushed forever.
Your pains, where are they now? They shaped intent

Which action frustrates; shaped an inward sense
Which is but keen despair, the agony
Of highest vision in the lowest pit.

LEO.

Nay, nay, I have a thought: keep to the stage,
To drama without song; for you can act —
Who knows how well, when all the soul is poured
Into that sluice alone.

ARMGART.

I know, and you:
The second or third best in tragedies
That cease to touch the fibre of the time.
No; song is gone, but nature's other gift,
Self-judgment, is not gone. Song was my speech,
And with its impulse only, action came:
Song was the battle's onset, when cool purpose
Glows into rage, becomes a warring god
And moves the limbs with miracle. But now —
Oh, I should stand hemmed in with thoughts and rules —
Say, "This way passion acts," yet never feel
The might of passion. How should I declaim?
As monsters write with feet instead of hands.
I will not feed on doing great tasks ill,
Dull the world's sense with mediocrity,
And live by trash that smothers excellence.
One gift I had that ranked me with the best —
The secret of my frame — and that is gone.
For all life now I am a broken thing.
But silence there! Good Leo, advise me now.
I would take humble work and do it well —
Teach music, singing — what I can — not here,
But in some smaller town where I may bring
The method you have taught me, pass your gift

To others who can use it for delight.
You think I can do that?

(*She pauses with a sob in her voice.*)

LEO.

Yes, yes, dear child!
And it were well, perhaps, to change the place —
Begin afresh as I did when I left
Vienna with a heart half broken.

ARMGART (*roused by surprise*).

You?

LEO.

Well, it is long ago. But I had lost —
No matter! We must bury our dead joys
And live above them with a living world.
But whither, think you, you would like to go?

ARMGART.

To Freiburg.

LEO.

In the Breisgau? And why there?
It is too small.

ARMGART.

Walpurga was born there,
And loves the place. She quitted it for me
These five years past. Now I will take her there.
Dear Leo, I will bury my dead joy.

LEO.

Mothers do so, bereaved; then learn to love
Another's living child.

ARMGART.

Oh, it is hard
To take the little corpse, and lay it low,

And say, "None misses it but me."
She sings . . . .
I mean Paulina sings Fidelio,
And they will welcome her to-night.

LEO.

Well, well,
'T is better that our griefs should not spread far.

1870.

HOW LISA LOVED THE KING.

SIX hundred years ago, in Dante's time,
Before his cheek was furrowed by deep rhyme —
When Europe, fed afresh from Eastern story,
Was like a garden tangled with the glory
Of flowers hand-planted and of flowers air-sown,
Climbing and trailing, budding and full-blown,
Where purple bells are tossed amid pink stars,
And springing blades, green troops in innocent wars,
Crowd every shady spot of teeming earth,
Making invisible motion visible birth —
Six hundred years ago, Palermo town
Kept holiday. A deed of great renown,
A high revenge, had freed it from the yoke
Of hated Frenchmen, and from Calpe's rock
To where the Bosporus caught the earlier sun,
'T was told that Pedro, King of Aragon,
Was welcomed master of all Sicily,
A royal knight, supreme as kings should be
In strength and gentleness that make high chivalry.

Spain was the favorite home of knightly grace,
Where generous men rode steeds of generous race;
Both Spanish, yet half Arab, both inspired
By mutual spirit, that each motion fired
With beauteous response, like minstrelsy
Afresh fulfilling fresh expectancy.
So when Palermo made high festival,
The joy of matrons and of maidens all

Was the mock terror of the tournament,
Where safety, with the glimpse of danger blent,
Took exaltation as from epic song,
Which greatly tells the pains that to great life belong.
And in all eyes King Pedro was the king
Of cavaliers: as in a full-gemmed ring
The largest ruby, or as that bright star
Whose shining shows us where the Hyads are.
His the best jennet, and he sat it best;
His weapon, whether tilting or in rest,
Was worthiest watching, and his face once seen
Gave to the promise of his royal mien
Such rich fulfilment as the opened eyes
Of a loved sleeper, or the long-watched rise
Of vernal day, whose joy o'er stream and meadow flies.

But of the maiden forms that thick enwreathed
The broad piazza and sweet witchery breathed,
With innocent faces budding all arow
From balconies and windows high and low,
Who was it felt the deep mysterious glow,
The impregnation with supernal fire
Of young ideal love — transformed desire,
Whose passion is but worship of that Best
Taught by the many-mingled creed of each young breast?
'T was gentle Lisa, of no noble line,
Child of Bernardo, a rich Florentine,
Who from his merchant-city hither came
To trade in drugs; yet kept an honest fame,
And had the virtue not to try and sell
Drugs that had none. He loved his riches well,
But loved them chiefly for his Lisa's sake,
Whom with a father's care he sought to make
The bride of some true honorable man:
Of Perdicone (so the rumor ran),

Whose birth was higher than his fortunes were;
For still your trader likes a mixture fair
Of blood that hurries to some higher strain
Than reckoning money's loss and money's gain.
And of such mixture good may surely come:
Lords' scions so may learn to cast a sum,
A trader's grandson bear a well-set head,
And have less conscious manners, better bred;
Nor, when he tries to be polite, be rude instead.

'T was Perdicone's friends made overtures
To good Bernardo: so one dame assures
Her neighbor dame who notices the youth
Fixing his eyes on Lisa; and in truth
Eyes that could see her on this summer day
Might find it hard to turn another way.
She had a pensive beauty, yet not sad;
Rather, like minor cadences that glad
The hearts of little birds amid spring boughs;
And oft the trumpet or the joust would rouse
Pulses that gave her cheek a finer glow,
Parting her lips that seemed a mimic bow
By chiselling Love for play in coral wrought,
Then quickened by him with the passionate thought,
The soul that trembled in the lustrous night
Of slow long eyes. Her body was so slight,
It seemed she could have floated in the sky,
And with the angelic choir made symphony;
But in her cheek's rich tinge, and in the dark
Of darkest hair and eyes, she bore a mark
Of kinship to her generous mother earth,
The fervid land that gives the plumy palm-trees birth.

She saw not Perdicone; her young mind
Dreamed not that any man had ever pined

For such a little simple maid as she:
She had but dreamed how heavenly it would be
To love some hero noble, beauteous, great,
Who would live stories worthy to narrate,
Like Roland, or the warriors of Troy,
The Cid, or Amadis, or that fair boy
Who conquered everything beneath the sun,
And somehow, some time, died at Babylon
Fighting the Moors. For heroes all were good
And fair as that archangel who withstood
The Evil One, the author of all wrong —
That Evil One who made the French so strong;
And now the flower of heroes must be he
Who drove those tyrants from dear Sicily,
So that her maids might walk to vespers tranquilly.

Young Lisa saw this hero in the king,
And as wood-lilies that sweet odors bring
Might dream the light that opes their modest eyne
Was lily-odored — and as rites divine,
Round turf-laid altars, or 'neath roofs of stone,
Draw sanctity from out the heart alone
That loves and worships, so the miniature
Perplexed of her soul's world, all virgin pure,
Filled with heroic virtues that bright form,
Raona's royalty, the finished norm
Of horsemanship — the half of chivalry:
For how could generous men avengers be,
Save as God's messengers on coursers fleet? —
These, scouring earth, made Spain with Syria meet
In one self world where the same right had sway,
And good must grow as grew the blessed day.
No more; great Love his essence had endued
With Pedro's form, and entering subdued
The soul of Lisa, fervid and intense,

Proud in its choice of proud obedience
To hardship glorified by perfect reverence.

Sweet Lisa homeward carried that dire guest,
And in her chamber through the hours of rest
The darkness was alight for her with sheen
Of arms, and pluméd helm, and bright between
Their commoner gloss, like the pure living spring
'Twixt porphyry lips, or living bird's bright wing
'Twixt golden wires, the glances of the king
Flashed on her soul, and waked vibrations there
Of known delights love-mixed to new and rare:
The impalpable dream was turned to breathing flesh,
Chill thought of summer to the warm close mesh
Of sunbeams held between the citron-leaves,
Clothing her life of life. Oh, she believes
That she could be content if he but knew
(Her poor small self could claim no other due)
How Lisa's lowly love had highest reach
Of wingéd passion, whereto wingéd speech
Would be scorched remnants left by mountain flame.
Though, had she such lame message, were it blame
To tell what greatness dwelt in her, what rank
She held in loving? Modest maidens shrank
From telling love that fed on selfish hope;
But love, as hopeless as the shattering song
Wailed for loved beings who have joined the throng
Of mighty dead ones. . . . . Nay, but she was weak —
Knew only prayers and ballads — could not speak
With eloquence save what dumb creatures have,
That with small cries and touches small boons crave.
She watched all day that she might see him pass
With knights and ladies; but she said, "Alas!
Though he should see me, it were all as one
He saw a pigeon sitting on the stone

Of wall or balcony: some colored spot
His eye just sees, his mind regardeth not.
I have no music-touch that could bring nigh
My love to his soul's hearing. I shall die,
And he will never know who Lisa was —
The trader's child, whose soaring spirit rose
As hedge-born aloe-flowers that rarest years disclose.

"For were I now a fair deep-breasted queen
A-horseback, with blonde hair, and tunic green
Gold-bordered, like Costanza, I should need
No change within to make me queenly there;
For they the royal-hearted women are
Who nobly love the noblest, yet have grace
For needy suffering lives in lowliest place,
Carrying a choicer sunlight in their smile,
The heavenliest ray that pitieth the vile.
My love is such, it cannot choose but soar
Up to the highest; yet forevermore,
Though I were happy, throned beside the king,
I should be tender to each little thing
With hurt warm breast, that had no speech to tell
Its inward pang, and I would soothe it well
With tender touch and with a low soft moan
For company: my dumb love-pang is lone,
Prisoned as topaz-beam within a rough-garbed stone."

So, inward-wailing, Lisa passed her days.
Each night the August moon with changing phase
Looked broader, harder on her unchanged pain;
Each noon the heat lay heavier again
On her despair; until her body frail
Shrank like the snow that watchers in the vale
See narrowed on the height each summer morn;
While her dark glance burnt larger, more forlorn,

As if the soul within her all on fire
Made of her being one swift funeral pyre.
Father and mother saw with sad dismay
The meaning of their riches melt away:
For without Lisa what would sequins buy?
What wish were left if Lisa were to die?
Through her they cared for summers still to come,
Else they would be as ghosts without a home
In any flesh that could feel glad desire.
They pay the best physicians, never tire
Of seeking what will soothe her, promising
That aught she longed for, though it were a thing
Hard to be come at as the Indian snow,
Or roses that on Alpine summits blow —
It should be hers. She answers with low voice,
She longs for death alone — death is her choice;
Death is the King who never did think scorn,
But rescues every meanest soul to sorrow born.

Yet one day, as they bent above her bed
And watched her in brief sleep, her drooping head
Turned gently, as the thirsty flowers that feel
Some moist revival through their petals steal,
And little flutterings of her lids and lips
Told of such dreamy joy as sometimes dips
A skyey shadow in the mind's poor pool,
She oped her eyes, and turned their dark gems full
Upon her father, as in utterance dumb
Of some new prayer that in her sleep had come.
"What is it, Lisa?" "Father, I would see
Minuccio, the great singer; bring him me."
For always, night and day, her unstilled thought,
Wandering all o'er its little world, had sought
How she could reach, by some soft pleading touch,
King Pedro's soul, that she who loved so much

Dying, might have a place within his mind —
A little grave which he would sometimes find
And plant some flower on it — some thought, some memory kind,
Till in her dream she saw Minuccio
Touching his viola, and chanting low
A strain that, falling on her brokenly,
Seemed blossoms lightly blown from off a tree,
Each burdened with a word that was a scent —
Raona, Lisa, love, death, tournament;
Then in her dream she said, "He sings of me —
Might be my messenger; ah, now I see
The king is listening —" Then she awoke,
And, missing her dear dream, that new-born longing spoke.

She longed for music: that was natural;
Physicians said it was medicinal;
The humors might be schooled by true consent
Of a fine tenor and fine instrument;
In brief, good music, mixed with doctor's stuff,
Apollo with Asklepios — enough!
Minuccio, entreated, gladly came.
(He was a singer of most gentle fame —
A noble, kindly spirit, not elate
That he was famous, but the song was great —
Would sing as finely to this suffering child
As at the court where princes on him smiled.)
Gently he entered and sat down by her,
Asking what sort of strain she would prefer —
The voice alone, or voice with viol wed;
Then, when she chose the last, he preluded
With magic hand, that summoned from the strings
Aerial spirits, rare yet vibrant wings
That fanned the pulses of his listener,
And waked each sleeping sense with blissful stir.

Her cheek already showed a slow faint blush,
But soon the voice, in pure full liquid rush,
Made all the passion, that till now she felt,
Seem but cool waters that in warmer melt.
Finished the song, she prayed to be alone
With kind Minuccio; for her faith had grown
To trust him as if missioned like a priest
With some high grace, that when his singing ceased
Still made him wiser, more magnanimous
Than common men who had no genius.

So laying her small hand within his palm,
She told him how that secret glorious harm
Of loftiest loving had befallen her;
That death, her only hope, most bitter were,
If when she died her love must perish too
As songs unsung and thoughts unspoken do,
Which else might live within another breast.
She said, "Minuccio, the grave were rest,
If I were sure, that lying cold and lone,
My love, my best of life, had safely flown
And nestled in the bosom of the king;
See, 't is a small weak bird, with unfledged wing.
But you will carry it for me secretly,
And bear it to the king, then come to me
And tell me it is safe, and I shall go
Content, knowing that he I love my love doth know."

Then she wept silently, but each large tear
Made pleading music to the inward ear
Of good Minuccio. "Lisa, trust in me,"
He said, and kissed her fingers loyally;
"It is sweet law to me to do your will,
And ere the sun his round shall thrice fulfil,
I hope to bring you news of such rare skill

As amulets have, that aches in trusting bosoms still."
He needed not to pause and first devise
How he should tell the king; for in nowise
Were such love-message worthily bested
Save in fine verse by music renderéd.
He sought a poet-friend, a Siennese,
And "Mico, mine," he said, "full oft to please
Thy whim of sadness I have sung thee strains
To make thee weep in verse: now pay my pains,
And write me a canzón divinely sad,
Sinlessly passionate and meekly mad
With young despair, speaking a maiden's heart
Of fifteen summers, who would fain depart
From ripening life's new-urgent mystery —
Love-choice of one too high her love to be —
But cannot yield her breath till she has poured
Her strength away in this hot-bleeding word
Telling the secret of her soul to her soul's lord."

Said Mico, "Nay, that thought is poesy,
I need but listen as it sings to me.
Comé thou again to-morrow." The third day,
When linkéd notes had perfected the lay,
Minuccio had his summons to the court
To make, as he was wont, the moments short
Of ceremonious dinner to the king.
This was the time when he had meant to bring
Melodious message of young Lisa's love:
He waited till the air had ceased to move
To ringing silver, till Falernian wine
Made quickened sense with quietude combine,
And then with passionate descant made each ear incline.

Love, thou didst see me, light as morning's breath,
Roaming a garden in a joyous error,
Laughing at chases vain, a happy child,

Till of thy countenance the alluring terror
In majesty from out the blossoms smiled,
From out their life seeming a beauteous Death.

O Love, who so didst choose me for thine own,
Taking this little isle to thy great sway,
See now, it is the honor of thy throne
That what thou gavest perish not away,
Nor leave some sweet remembrance to atone
By life that will be for the brief life gone:
Hear, ere the shroud o'er these frail limbs be thrown —
Since every king is vassal unto thee,
My heart's lord needs must listen loyally —
Oh tell him I am waiting for my Death!

Tell him, for that he hath such royal power
'T were hard for him to think how small a thing,
How slight a sign, would make a wealthy dower
For one like me, the bride of that pale king
Whose bed is mine at some swift-nearing hour.
Go to my lord, and to his memory bring
That happy birthday of my sorrowing
When his large glance made meaner gazers glad,
Entering the bannered lists: 't was then I had
The wound that laid me in the arms of Death.

Tell him, O Love, I am a lowly maid,
No more than any little knot of thyme
That he with careless foot may often tread;
Yet lowest fragrance oft will mount sublime
And cleave to things most high and hallowéd,
As doth the fragrance of my life's springtime,
My lowly love, that soaring seeks to climb
Within his thought, and make a gentle bliss,
More blissful than if mine, in being his:
So shall I live in him and rest in Death.

The strain was new. It seemed a pleading cry,
And yet a rounded perfect melody,
Making grief beauteous as the tear-filled eyes
Of little child at little miseries.
Trembling at first, then swelling as it rose,
Like rising light that broad and broader grows,
It filled the hall, and so possessed the air
That not one breathing soul was present there,
Though dullest, slowest, but was quivering
In music's grasp, and forced to hear her sing.
But most such sweet compulsion took the mood
Of Pedro (tired of doing what he would).
Whether the words which that strange meaning bore
Were but the poet's feigning or aught more,
Was bounden question, since their aim must be
At some imagined or true royalty.
He called Minuccio and bade him tell
What poet of the day had writ so well;
For though they came behind all former rhymes,
The verses were not bad for these poor times.
"Monsignor, they are only three days old,"
Minuccio said; "but it must not be told
How this song grew, save to your royal ear."
Eager, the king withdrew where none was near,
And gave close audience to Minuccio,
Who meetly told that love-tale meet to know.
The king had features pliant to confess
The presence of a manly tenderness —
Son, father, brother, lover, blent in one,
In fine harmonic exaltation —
The spirit of religious chivalry.
He listened, and Minuccio could see
The tender, generous admiration spread
O'er all his face, and glorify his head
With royalty that would have kept its rank

Though his brocaded robes to tatters shrank.
He answered without pause, "So sweet a maid,
In nature's own insignia arrayed,
Though she were come of unmixed trading blood
That sold and bartered ever since the Flood,
Would have the self-contained and single worth
Of radiant jewels born in darksome earth.
Raona were a shame to Sicily,
Letting such love and tears unhonored be:
Hasten, Minuccio, tell her that the king
To-day will surely visit her when vespers ring."

Joyful, Minuccio bore the joyous word,
And told at full, while none but Lisa heard,
How each thing had befallen, sang the song,
And like a patient nurse who would prolong
All means of soothing, dwelt upon each tone,
Each look, with which the mighty Aragon
Marked the high worth his royal heart assigned
To that dear place he held in Lisa's mind.
She listened till the draughts of pure content
Through all her limbs like some new being went —
Life, not recovered, but untried before,
From out the growing world's unmeasured store
Of fuller, better, more divinely mixed.
'T was glad reverse: she had so firmly fixed
To die, already seemed to fall a veil
Shrouding the inner glow from light of senses pale.
Her parents wondering see her half arise —
Wondering, rejoicing, see her long dark eyes
Brimful with clearness, not of 'scaping tears,
But of some light ethereal that enspheres
Their orbs with calm, some vision newly learnt
Where strangest fires erewhile had blindly burnt.
She asked to have her soft white robe and band

And coral ornaments, and with her hand
She gave her locks' dark length a backward fall,
Then looked intently in a mirror small,
And feared her face might perhaps displease the king;
"In truth," she said, "I am a tiny thing;
I was too bold to tell what could such visit bring."
Meanwhile the king, revolving in his thought
That virgin passion, was more deeply wrought
To chivalrous pity; and at vesper bell,
With careless mien which hid his purpose well,
Went forth on horseback, and as if by chance
Passing Bernardo's house, he paused to glance
At the fine garden of this wealthy man,
This Tuscan trader turned Palermitan:
But, presently dismounting, chose to walk
Amid the trellises, in gracious talk
With the same trader, deigning even to ask
If he had yet fulfilled the father's task
Of marrying that daughter whose young charms
Himself, betwixt the passages of arms,
Noted admiringly. "Monsignor, no,
She is not married; that were little woe,
Since she has counted barely fifteen years;
But all such hopes of late have turned to fears;
She droops and fades; though for a space quite brief—
Scarce three hours past— she finds some strange relief."
The king avised: "'T were dole to all of us,
The world should lose a maid so beauteous;
Let me now see her; since I am her liege lord,
Her spirits must wage war with death at my strong
word."

In such half-serious playfulness, he wends,
With Lisa's father and two chosen friends,
Up to the chamber where she pillowed sits

Watching the open door, that now admits
A presence as much better than her dreams,
As happiness than any longing seems.
The king advanced, and, with a reverent kiss
Upon her hand, said, "Lady, what is this?
You, whose sweet youth should others' solace be,
Pierce all our hearts, languishing piteously.
We pray you, for the love of us, be cheered,
Nor be too reckless of that life, endeared
To us who know your passing worthiness,
And count your blooming life as part of our life's bliss."
Those words, that touch upon her hand from him
Whom her soul worshipped, as far seraphim
Worship the distant glory, brought some shame
Quivering upon her cheek, yet thrilled her frame
With such deep joy she seemed in paradise,
In wondering gladness, and in dumb surprise
That bliss could be so blissful: then she spoke —
"Signor, I was too weak to bear the yoke,
The golden yoke of thoughts too great for me;
That was the ground of my infirmity.
But now, I pray your grace to have belief
That I shall soon be well, nor any more cause grief."

The king alone perceived the covert sense
Of all her words, which made one evidence
With her pure voice and candid loveliness,
That he had lost much honor, honoring less
That message of her passionate distress.
He stayed beside her for a little while
With gentle looks and speech, until a smile
As placid as a ray of early morn
On opening flower-cups o'er her lips was borne.
When he had left her, and the tidings spread
Through all the town how he had visited

The Tuscan trader's daughter, who was sick,
Men said, it was a royal deed and catholic.

And Lisa? she no longer wished for death;
But as a poet, who sweet verses saith
Within his soul, and joys in music there,
Nor seeks another heaven, nor can bear
Disturbing pleasures, so was she content,
Breathing the life of grateful sentiment.
She thought no maid betrothed could be more blest;
For treasure must be valued by the test
Of highest excellence and rarity,
And her dear joy was best as best could be;
There seemed no other crown to her delight
Now the high loved one saw her love aright.
Thus her soul thriving on that exquisite mood,
Spread like the May-time all its beauteous good
O'er the soft bloom of neck, and arms, and cheek,
And strengthened the sweet body, once so weak,
Until she rose and walked, and, like a bird
With sweetly rippling throat, she made her spring joys heard.
The king, when he the happy change had seen,
Trusted the ear of Constance, his fair queen,
With Lisa's innocent secret, and conferred
How they should jointly, by their deed and word,
Honor this maiden's love, which like the prayer
Of loyal hermits, never thought to share
In what it gave. The queen had that chief grace
Of womanhood, a heart that can embrace
All goodness in another woman's form;
And that same day, ere the sun lay too warm
On southern terraces, a messenger
Informed Bernardo that the royal pair
Would straightway visit him and celebrate

Their gladness at his daughter's happier state,
Which they were fain to see. Soon came the king
On horseback, with his barons, heralding
The advent of the queen in courtly state;
And all, descending at the garden gate,
Streamed with their feathers, velvet, and brocade,
Through the pleached alleys, till they, pausing, made
A lake of splendor 'mid the aloes gray —
When, meekly facing all their proud array,
The white-robed Lisa with her parents stood,
As some white dove before the gorgeous brood
Of dapple-breasted birds born by the Colchian flood

The king and queen, by gracious looks and speech,
Encourage her, and thus their courtiers teach
How this fair morning they may courtliest be
By making Lisa pass it happily.
And soon the ladies and the barons all
Draw her by turns, as at a festival
Made for her sake, to easy, gay discourse,
And compliment with looks and smiles enforce;
A joyous hum is heard the gardens round;
Soon there is Spanish dancing and the sound
Of minstrel's song, and autumn fruits are pluckt;
Till mindfully the king and queen conduct
Lisa apart to where a trellised shade
Made pleasant resting. Then King Pedro said —
"Excellent maiden, that rich gift of love
Your heart hath made us, hath a worth above
All royal treasures, nor is fitly met
Save when the grateful memory of deep debt
Lies still behind the outward honors done:
And as a sign that no oblivion
Shall overflood that faithful memory,
We while we live your cavalier will be,

Nor will we ever arm ourselves for fight,
Whether for struggle dire or brief delight
Of warlike feigning, but we first will take
The colors you ordain, and for your sake
Charge the more bravely where your emblem is
Nor will we ever claim an added bliss
To our sweet thoughts of you save one sole kiss
But there still rests the outward honor meet
To mark your worthiness, and we entreat
That you will turn your ear to proffered vows
Of one who loves you, and would be your spouse.
We must not wrong yourself and Sicily
By letting all your blooming years pass by
Unmated: you will give the world its due
From beauteous maiden and become a matron true."

Then Lisa, wrapt in virgin wonderment
At her ambitious love's complete content,
Which left no further good for her to seek
Than love's obedience, said with accent meek —
"Monsignor, I know well that were it known
To all the world how high my love had flown,
There would be few who would not deem me mad,
Or say my mind the falsest image had
Of my condition and your lofty place.
But heaven has seen that for no moment's space
Have I forgotten you to be the king,
Or me myself to be a lowly thing —
A little lark, enamored of the sky,
That soared to sing, to break its breast, and die.
But, as you better know than I, the heart
In choosing chooseth not its own desert,
But that great merit which attracteth it;
'T is law, I struggled, but I must submit,
And having seen a worth all worth above,

I loved you, love you, and shall always love.
But that doth mean, my will is ever yours,
Not only when your will my good insures,
But if it wrought me what the world calls harm —
Fire, wounds, would wear from your dear will a charm.
That you will be my knight is full content,
And for that kiss — I pray, first for the queen's consent."

Her answer, given with such firm gentleness,
Pleased the queen well, and made her hold no less
Of Lisa's merit than the king had held.
And so, all cloudy threats of grief dispelled,
There was betrothal made that very morn
'Twixt Perdicone, youthful, brave, well-born,
And Lisa, whom he loved; she loving well
The lot that from obedience befell.
The queen a rare betrothal ring on each
Bestowed, and other gems, with gracious speech.
And that no joy might lack, the king, who knew
The youth was poor, gave him rich Ceffalú
And Cataletta, large and fruitful lands —
Adding much promise when he joined their hands.
At last he said to Lisa, with an air
Gallant yet noble: "Now we claim our share
From your sweet love, a share which is not small:
For in the sacrament one crumb is all."
Then taking her small face his hands between,
He kissed her on the brow with kiss serene,
Fit seal to that pure vision her young soul had seen.

Sicilians witnessed that King Pedro kept
His royal promise: Perdicone stept
To many honors honorably won,
Living with Lisa in true union.
Throughout his life the king still took delight

To call himself fair Lisa's faithful knight;
And never wore in field or tournament
A scarf or emblem save by Lisa sent.

Such deeds made subjects loyal in that land:
They joyed that one so worthy to command,
So chivalrous and gentle, had become
The king of Sicily, and filled the room
Of Frenchmen, who abused the Church's trust,
Till, in a righteous vengeance on their lust,
Messina rose, with God, and with the dagger's thrust.

L'ENVOI.

Reader, this story pleased me long ago
In the bright pages of Boccaccio,
And where the author of a good we know,
Let us not fail to pay the grateful thanks we owe.

1869.

A MINOR PROPHET.

I HAVE a friend, a vegetarian seer,
By name Elias Baptist Butterworth,
A harmless, bland, disinterested man,
Whose ancestors in Cromwell's day believed
The Second Advent certain in five years,
But when King Charles the Second came instead
Revised their date and sought another world:
I mean — not heaven but — America.
A fervid stock, whose generous hope embraced
The fortunes of mankind, not stopping short
At rise of leather, or the fall of gold,
Nor listening to the voices of the time
As housewives listen to a cackling hen,
With wonder whether she has laid her egg
On their own nest-egg. Still they did insist
Somewhat too wearisomely on the joys
Of their Millennium, when coats and hats
Would all be of one pattern, books and songs
All fit for Sundays, and the casual talk
As good as sermons preached extempore.

And in Elias the ancestral zeal
Breathes strong as ever, only modified
By Transatlantic air and modern thought.
You could not pass him in the street and fail
To note his shoulders' long declivity,
Beard to the waist, swan-neck, and large pale eyes;
Or, when he lifts his hat, to mark his hair

Brushed back to show his great capacity —
A full grain's length at the angle of the brow
Proving him witty, while the shallower men
Only seem witty in their repartees.
Not that he 's vain, but that his doctrine needs
The testimony of his frontal lobe.

On all points he adopts the latest views;
Takes for the key of universal Mind
The "levitation" of stout gentlemen;
Believes the Rappings are not spirits' work,
But the Thought-atmosphere's, a stream of brains
In correlated force of raps, as proved
By motion, heat, and science generally;
The spectrum, for example, which has shown
The selfsame metals in the sun as here;
So the Thought-atmosphere is everywhere:
High truths that glimmered under other names
To ancient sages, whence good scholarship
Applied to Eleusinian mysteries —
The Vedas — Tripiṭaka — Vendidad —
Might furnish weaker proof for weaker minds
That Thought was rapping in the hoary past,
And might have edified the Greeks by raps
At the greater Dionysia, if their ears
Had not been filled with Sophoclean verse.
And when all Earth is vegetarian —
When, lacking butchers, quadrupeds die out,
And less Thought-atmosphere is reabsorbed
By nerves of insects parasitical,
Those higher truths, seized now by higher minds
But not expressed (the insects hindering),
Will either flash out into eloquence,
Or better still, be comprehensible
By rappings simply, without need of roots.

'T is on this theme — the vegetarian world —
That good Elias willingly expands:
He loves to tell in mildly nasal tones
And vowels stretched to suit the widest views,
The future fortunes of our infant Earth —
When it will be too full of human kind
To have the room for wilder animals.
Saith he, Sahara will be populous
With families of gentlemen retired
From commerce in more Central Africa,
Who order coolness as we order coal,
And have a lobe anterior strong enough
To think away the sand-storms. Science thus
Will leave no spot on this terraqueous globe
Unfit to be inhabited by man,
The chief of animals: all meaner brutes
Will have been smoked and elbowed out of life.
No lions then shall lap Caffrarian pools,
Or shake the Atlas with their midnight roar:
Even the slow, slime-loving crocodile,
The last of animals to take a hint,
Will then retire forever from a scene
Where public feeling strongly sets against him.
Fishes may lead carnivorous lives obscure,
But must not dream of culinary rank
Or being dished in good society.
Imagination in that distant age,
Aiming at fiction called historical,
Will vainly try to reconstruct the times
When it was men's preposterous delight
To sit astride live horses, which consumed
Materials for incalculable cakes;
When there were milkmaids who drew milk from cows
With udders kept abnormal for that end
Since the rude mythopœic period

Of Aryan dairymen, who did not blush
To call their milkmaid and their daughter one —
Helplessly gazing at the Milky Way,
Nor dreaming of the astral cocoa-nuts
Quite at the service of posterity.
'T is to be feared, though, that the duller boys,
Much given to anachronisms and nuts
(Elias has confessed boys will be boys),
May write a jockey for a centaur, think
Europa's suitor was an Irish bull,
Æsop a journalist who wrote up Fox,
And Bruin a chief swindler upon 'Change.
Boys will be boys, but dogs will all be moral,
With longer alimentary canals
Suited to diet vegetarian.
The uglier breeds will fade from memory,
Or, being palæontological,
Live but as portraits in large learned books,
Distasteful to the feelings of an age
Nourished on purest beauty. Earth will hold
No stupid brutes, no cheerful queernesses,
No naïve cunning, grave absurdity.
Wart-pigs with tender and parental grunts,
Wombats much flattened as to their contour,
Perhaps from too much crushing in the ark,
But taking meekly that fatality;
The serious cranes, unstung by ridicule;
Long-headed, short-legged, solemn-looking curs,
(Wise, silent critics of a flippant age);
The silly straddling foals, the weak-brained geese
Hissing fallaciously at sound of wheels —
All these rude products will have disappeared
Along with every faulty human type.
By dint of diet vegetarian
All will be harmony of hue and line,

Bodies and minds all perfect, limbs well-turned,
And talk quite free from aught erroneous.

Thus far Elias in his seer's mantle:
But at this climax in his prophecy
My sinking spirits, fearing to be swamped,
Urge me to speak. "High prospects these, my friend,
Setting the weak carnivorous brain astretch;
We will resume the thread another day."
"To-morrow," cries Elias, "at this hour?"
"No, not to-morrow — I shall have a cold —
At least I feel some soreness — this endemic —
Good-by."

No tears are sadder than the smile
With which I quit Elias. Bitterly
I feel that every change upon this earth
Is bought with sacrifice. My yearnings fail
To reach that high apocalyptic mount
Which shows in bird's-eye view a perfect world,
Or enter warmly into other joys
Than those of faulty, struggling human kind.
That strain upon my soul's too feeble wing
Ends in ignoble floundering: I fall
Into short-sighted pity for the men
Who living in those perfect future times
Will not know half the dear imperfect things
That move my smiles and tears — will never know
The fine old incongruities that raise
My friendly laugh; the innocent conceits
That like a needless eyeglass or black patch
Give those who wear them harmless happiness;
The twists and cracks in our poor earthenware,
That touch me to more conscious fellowship
(I am not myself the finest Parian)

With my coevals. So poor Colin Clout,
To whom raw onion gives prospective zest,
Consoling hours of dampest wintry work,
Could hardly fancy any regal joys
Quite unimpregnate with the onion's scent:
Perhaps his highest hopes are not all clear
Of waftings from that energetic bulb:
'T is well that onion is not heresy.
Speaking in parable, I am Colin Clout.
A clinging flavor penetrates my life —
My onion is imperfectness: I cleave
To nature's blunders, evanescent types
Which sages banish from Utopia.
"Not worship beauty?" say you. Patience, friend!
I worship in the temple with the rest;
But by my hearth I keep a sacred nook
For gnomes and dwarfs, duck-footed waddling elves
Who stitched and hammered for the weary man
In days of old. And in that piety
I clothe ungainly forms inherited
From toiling generations, daily bent
At desk, or plough, or loom, or in the mine,
In pioneering labors for the world.
Nay, I am apt when floundering confused
From too rash flight, to grasp at paradox,
And pity future men who will not know
A keen experience with pity blent,
The pathos exquisite of lovely minds
Hid in harsh forms — not penetrating them
Like fire divine within a common bush
Which glows transfigured by the heavenly guest,
So that men put their shoes off; but encaged
Like a sweet child within some thick-walled cell,
Who leaps and fails to hold the window-bars,
But having shown a little dimpled hand

Is visited thenceforth by tender hearts
Whose eyes keep watch about the prison walls.
A foolish, nay, a wicked paradox!
For purest pity is the eye of love
Melting at sight of sorrow; and to grieve
Because it sees no sorrow, shows a love
Warped from its truer nature, turned to love
Of merest habit, like the miser's greed.
But I am Colin still: my prejudice
Is for the flavor of my daily food.
Not that I doubt the world is growing still
As once it grew from Chaos and from Night;
Or have a soul too shrunken for the hope
Which dawned in human breasts, a double morn,
With earliest watchings of the rising light
Chasing the darkness; and through many an age
Has raised the vision of a future time
That stands an Angel with a face all mild
Spearing the demon. I too rest in faith
That man's perfection is the crowning flower,
Toward which the urgent sap in life's great tree
Is pressing — seen in puny blossoms now,
But in the world's great morrows to expand
With broadest petal and with deepest glow.

Yet, see the patched and plodding citizen
Waiting upon the pavement with the throng
While some victorious world-hero makes
Triumphal entry, and the peal of shouts
And flash of faces 'neath uplifted hats
Run like a storm of joy along the streets!
He says, "God bless him!" almost with a sob,
As the great hero passes; he is glad
The world holds mighty men and mighty deeds;
The music stirs his pulses like strong wine,

The moving splendor touches him with awe —
'T is glory shed around the common weal,
And he will pay his tribute willingly,
Though with the pennies earned by sordid toil.
Perhaps the hero's deeds have helped to bring
A time when every honest citizen
Shall wear a coat unpatched. And yet he feels
More easy fellowship with neighbors there
Who look on too; and he will soon relapse
From noticing the banners and the steeds
To think with pleasure there is just one bun
Left in his pocket, that may serve to tempt
The wide-eyed lad, whose weight is all too much
For that young mother's arms: and then he falls
To dreamy picturing of sunny days
When he himself was a small big-cheeked lad
In some far village where no heroes came,
And stood a listener 'twixt his father's legs
In the warm firelight, while the old folk talked
And shook their heads and looked upon the floor;
And he was puzzled, thinking life was fine —
The bread and cheese so nice all through the year
And Christmas sure to come. Oh that good time!
He, could he choose, would have those days again
And see the dear old-fashioned things once more.
But soon the wheels and drums have all passed by
And tramping feet are heard like sudden rain:
The quiet startles our good citizen;
He feels the child upon his arms, and knows
He is with the people making holiday
Because of hopes for better days to come.
But Hope to him was like the brilliant west
Telling of sunrise in a world unknown,
And from that dazzling curtain of bright hues
He turned to the familiar face of fields

Lying all clear in the calm morning land.
Maybe 't is wiser not to fix a lens
Too scrutinizing on the glorious times
When Barbarossa shall arise and shake
His mountain, good King Arthur come again,
And all the heroes of such giant soul
That, living once to cheer mankind with hope,
They had to sleep until the time was ripe
For greater deeds to match their greater thought.
Yet no! the earth yields nothing more Divine
Than high prophetic vision — than the Seer
Who fasting from man's meaner joy beholds
The paths of beauteous order, and constructs
A fairer type, to shame our low content.
But prophecy is like potential sound
Which turned to music seems a voice sublime
From out the soul of light; but turns to noise
In scrannel pipes, and makes all ears averse.

The faith that life on earth is being shaped
To glorious ends, that order, justice, love,
Mean man's completeness, mean effect as sure
As roundness in the dew-drop — that great faith
Is but the rushing and expanding stream
Of thought, of feeling, fed by all the past.
Our finest hope is finest memory,
As they who love in age think youth is blest
Because it has a life to fill with love.
Full souls are double mirrors, making still
An endless vista of fair things before
Repeating things behind: so faith is strong
Only when we are strong, shrinks when we shrink
It comes when music stirs us, and the chords
Moving on some grand climax shake our souls
With influx new that makes new energies

It comes in swellings of the heart and tears
That rise at noble and at gentle deeds —
At labors of the master-artist's hand
Which, trembling, touches to a finer end,
Trembling before an image seen within.
It comes in moments of heroic love,
Unjealous joy in joy not made for us —
In conscious triumph of the good within
Making us worship goodness that rebukes.
Even our failures are a prophecy,
Even our yearnings and our bitter tears
After that fair and true we cannot grasp;
As patriots who seem to die in vain
Make liberty more sacred by their pangs.

Presentiment of better things on earth
Sweeps in with every force that stirs our souls
To admiration, self-renouncing love,
Or thoughts, like light, that bind the world in one, —
Sweeps like the sense of vastness, when at night
We hear the roll and dash of waves that break
Nearer and nearer with the rushing tide,
Which rises to the level of the cliff
Because the wide Atlantic rolls behind,
Throbbing respondent to the far-off orbs.

1865.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

I.

I CANNOT choose but think upon the time
When our two lives grew like two buds that kiss
At lightest thrill from the bee's swinging chime,
Because the one so near the other is.

He was the elder and a little man
Of forty inches, bound to show no dread,
And I the girl that puppy-like now ran,
Now lagged behind my brother's larger tread.

I held him wise, and when he talked to me
Of snakes and birds, and which God loved the best,
I thought his knowledge marked the boundary
Where men grew blind, though angels knew the rest.

If he said "Hush!" I tried to hold my breath;
Wherever he said "Come!" I stepped in faith.

II.

Long years have left their writing on my brow,
But yet the freshness and the dew-fed beam
Of those young mornings are about me now,
When we two wandered toward the far-off stream

With rod and line. Our basket held a store
Baked for us only, and I thought with joy

That I should have my share, though he had more,
Because he was the elder and a boy.

The firmaments of daisies since to me
Have had those mornings in their opening eyes,
The bunchéd cowslip's pale transparency
Carries that sunshine of sweet memories,

And wild-rose branches take their finest scent
From those blest hours of infantine content.

III.

Our mother bade us keep the trodden ways,
Stroked down my tippet, set my brother's frill,
Then with the benediction of her gaze
Clung to us lessening, and pursued us still

Across the homestead to the rookery elms,
Whose tall old trunks had each a grassy mound,
So rich for us, we counted them as realms
With varied products: here were earth-nuts found,

And here the Lady-fingers in deep shade;
Here sloping toward the Moat the rushes grew,
The large to split for pith, the small to braid;
While over all the dark rooks cawing flew,

And made a happy strange solemnity,
A deep-toned chant from life unknown to me.

IV.

Our meadow-path had memorable spots:
One where it bridged a tiny rivulet,
Deep hid by tangled blue Forget-me-nots;
And all along the waving grasses met

My little palm, or nodded to my cheek,
When flowers with upturned faces gazing drew
My wonder downward, seeming all to speak
With eyes of souls that dumbly heard and knew.

Then came the copse, where wild things rushed unseen,
And black-scathed grass betrayed the past abode
Of mystic gypsies, who still lurked between
Me and each hidden distance of the road.

A gypsy once had startled me at play,
Blotting with her dark smile my sunny day.

v.

Thus rambling we were schooled in deepest lore,
And learned the meanings that give words a soul,
The fear, the love, the primal passionate store,
Whose shaping impulses make manhood whole.

Those hours were seed to all my after good;
My infant gladness, through eye, ear, and touch,
Took easily as warmth a various food
To nourish the sweet skill of loving much.

For who in age shall roam the earth and find
Reasons for loving that will strike out love
With sudden rod from the hard year-pressed mind?
Were reasons sown as thick as stars above,

'T is love must see them, as the eyes see light:
Day is but Number to the darkened sight.

vi.

Our brown canal was endless to my thought;
And on its banks I sat in dreamy peace,

Unknowing how the good I loved was wrought,
Untroubled by the fear that it would cease.

Slowly the barges floated into view,
Rounding a grassy hill to me sublime
With some Unknown beyond it, whither flew
The parting cuckoo toward a fresh spring-time.

The wide-arched bridge, the scented elder-flowers,
The wondrous watery rings that died too soon,
The echoes of the quarry, the still hours
With white robe sweeping on the shadeless noon,

Were but my growing self, are part of me,
My present Past, my root of piety.

VII.

Those long days measured by my little feet
Had chronicles which yield me many a text;
Where irony still finds an image meet
Of full-grown judgments in this world perplext.

One day my brother left me in high charge,
To mind the rod, while he went seeking bait,
And bade me, when I saw a nearing barge,
Snatch out the line, lest he should come too late.

Proud of the task, I watched with all my might
For one whole minute, till my eyes grew wide,
Till sky and earth took on a strange new light
And seemed a dream-world floating on some tide—

A fair pavilioned boat for me alone
Bearing me onward through the vast unknown.

VIII.

But sudden came the barge's pitch-black prow,
Nearer and angrier came my brother's cry,
And all my soul was quivering fear, when lo!
Upon the imperilled line, suspended high,

A silver perch! My guilt that won the prey,
Now turned to merit, had a guerdon rich
Of hugs and praises, and made merry play,
Until my triumph reached its highest pitch

When all at home were told the wondrous feat,
And how the little sister had fished well.
In secret, though my fortune tasted sweet,
I wondered why this happiness befell.

"The little lass had luck," the gardener said:
And so I learned, luck was with glory wed.

IX.

We had the selfsame world enlarged for each
By loving difference of girl and boy:
The fruit that hung on high beyond my reach
He plucked for me, and oft he must employ

A measuring glance to guide my tiny shoe
Where lay firm stepping-stones, or call to mind
"This thing I like my sister may not do,
For she is little, and I must be kind."

Thus boyish Will the nobler mastery learned
Where inward vision over impulse reigns,
Widening its life with separate life discerned,
A Like unlike, a Self that self restrains.

His years with others must the sweeter be
For those brief days he spent in loving me.

X.

His sorrow was my sorrow, and his joy
Sent little leaps and laughs through all my frame;
My doll seemed lifeless and no girlish toy
Had any reason when my brother came.

I knelt with him at marbles, marked his fling
Cut the ringed stem and make the apple drop,
Or watched him winding close the spiral string
That looped the orbits of the humming top.

Grasped by such fellowship my vagrant thought
Ceased with dream-fruit dream-wishes to fulfil;
My aëry-picturing fantasy was taught
Subjection to the harder, truer skill

That seeks with deeds to grave a thought-tracked line,
And by "What is," "What will be" to define.

XI.

School parted us; we never found again
That childish world where our two spirits mingled
Like scents from varying roses that remain
One sweetness, nor can evermore be singled.

Yet the twin habit of that early time
Lingered for long about the heart and tongue:
We had been natives of one happy clime,
And its dear accent to our utterance clung,

Till the dire years whose awful name is Change
Had grasped our souls still yearning in divorce,
And pitiless shaped them in two forms that range
Two elements which sever their life's course.

But were another childhood-world my share,
I would be born a little sister there.

1869

STRADIVARIUS.

YOUR soul was lifted by the wings to-day
Hearing the master of the violin:
You praised him, praised the great Sebastian too
Who made that fine Chaconne; but did you think
Of old Antonio Stradivari? — him
Who a good century and half ago
Put his true work in that brown instrument
And by the nice adjustment of its frame
Gave it responsive life, continuous
With the master's finger-tips and perfected
Like them by delicate rectitude of use.
Not Bach alone, helped by fine precedent
Of genius gone before, nor Joachim
Who holds the strain afresh incorporate
By inward hearing and notation strict
Of nerve and muscle, made our joy to-day:
Another soul was living in the air
And swaying it to true deliverance
Of high invention and responsive skill:
That plain white-aproned man who stood at work
Patient and accurate full fourscore years,
Cherished his sight and touch by temperance,
And since keen sense is love of perfectness
Made perfect violins, the needed paths
For inspiration and high mastery.

No simpler man than he: he never cried,
"Why was I born to this monotonous task

Of making violins?" or flung them down
To suit with hurling act a well-hurled curse
At labor on such perishable stuff.
Hence neighbors in Cremona held him dull,
Called him a slave, a mill-horse, a machine,
Begged him to tell his motives or to lend
A few gold pieces to a loftier mind.
Yet he had pithy words full fed by fact;
For Fact, well-trusted, reasons and persuades,
Is gnomic, cutting, or ironical,
Draws tears, or is a tocsin to arouse —
Can hold all figures of the orator
In one plain sentence; has her pauses too —
Eloquent silence at the chasm abrupt
Where knowledge ceases. Thus Antonio
Made answers as Fact willed, and made them strong.

Naldo, a painter of eclectic school,
Taking his dicers, candlelight and grins
From Caravaggio, and in holier groups
Combining Flemish flesh with martyrdom —
Knowing all tricks of style at thirty-one,
And weary of them, while Antonio
At sixty-nine wrought placidly his best,
Making the violin you heard to-day —
Naldo would tease him oft to tell his aims.
"Perhaps thou hast some pleasant vice to feed —
The love of louis d'ors in heaps of four,
Each violin a heap — I 've naught to blame;
My vices waste such heaps. But then, why work
With painful nicety? Since fame once earned
By luck or merit — oftenest by luck —
(Else why do I put Bonifazio's name
To work that '*pinxit Naldo*' would not sell?)
Is welcome index to the wealthy mob

Where they should pay their gold, and where they pay
There they find merit — take your tow for flax,
And hold the flax unlabelled with your name,
Too coarse for sufferance."
Antonio then:
"I like the gold — well, yes — but not for meals.
And as my stomach, so my eye and hand,
And inward sense that works along with both,
Have hunger that can never feed on coin.
Who draws a line and satisfies his soul,
Making it crooked where it should be straight?
An idiot with an oyster-shell may draw
His lines along the sand, all wavering,
Fixing no point or pathway to a point;
An idiot one remove may choose his line,
Straggle and be content; but God be praised,
Antonio Stradivari has an eye
That winces at false work and loves the true,
With hand and arm that play upon the tool
As willingly as any singing bird
Sets him to sing his morning roundelay,
Because he likes to sing and likes the song.

Then Naldo: "'T is a petty kind of fame
At best, that comes of making violins;
And saves no masses, either. Thou wilt go
To purgatory none the less."
But he:
"'T were purgatory here to make them ill;
And for my fame — when any master holds
'Twixt chin and hand a violin of mine,
He will be glad that Stradivari lived,
Made violins, and made them of the best.
The masters only know whose work is good:
They will choose mine, and while God gives them skill

I give them instruments to play upon,
God choosing me to help Him."

"What! were God
At fault for violins, thou absent?"
"Yes;
He were at fault for Stradivari's work."

"Why, many hold Giuseppe's violins
As good as thine."
"May be: they are different.
His quality declines: he spoils his hand
With over-drinking. But were his the best,
He could not work for two. My work is mine,
And, heresy or not, if my hand slacked
I should rob God — since He is fullest good —
Leaving a blank instead of violins.
I say, not God Himself can make man's best
Without best men to help Him. I am one best
Here in Cremona, using sunlight well
To fashion finest maple till it serves
More cunningly than throats, for harmony.
'T is rare delight: I would not change my skill
To be the Emperor with bungling hands,
And lose my work, which comes as natural
As self at waking."
"Thou art little more
Than a deft potter's wheel, Antonio;
Turning out work by mere necessity
And lack of varied function. Higher arts
Subsist on freedom — eccentricity —
Uncounted inspirations — influence
That comes with drinking, gambling, talk turned wild,
Then moody misery and lack of food —
With every dithyrambic fine excess:

These make at last a storm which flashes out
In lightning revelations. Steady work
Turns genius to a loom; the soul must lie
Like grapes beneath the sun till ripeness comes
And mellow vintage. I could paint you now
The finest Crucifixion; yesternight
Returning home I saw it on a sky
Blue-black, thick-starred. I want two louis d'ors
To buy the canvas and the costly blues —
Trust me a fortnight."

"Where are those last two
I lent thee for thy Judith? — her thou saw'st
In saffron gown, with Holofernes' head
And beauty all complete?"

"She is but sketched:
I lack the proper model — and the mood.
A great idea is an eagle's egg,
Craves time for hatching; while the eagle sits,
Feed her."

"If thou wilt call thy pictures eggs
I call the hatching, Work. 'T is God gives skill,
But not without men's hands: He could not make
Antonio Stradivari's violins
Without Antonio. Get thee to thy easel."

1873.

A COLLEGE BREAKFAST-PARTY.

YOUNG Hamlet, not the hesitating Dane,
But one named after him, who lately strove
For honors at our English Wittenberg —
Blond, metaphysical, and sensuous,
Questioning all things and yet half convinced
Credulity were better; held inert
'Twixt fascinations of all opposites,
And half suspecting that the mightiest soul
(Perhaps his own ?) was union of extremes,
Having no choice but choice of everything:
As, drinking deep to-day for love of wine,
To-morrow half a Brahmin, scorning life
As mere illusion, yearning for that True
Which has no qualities; another day
Finding the fount of grace in sacraments,
And purest reflex of the light divine
In gem-bossed pyx and broidered chasuble,
Resolved to wear no stockings and to fast
With arms extended, waiting ecstasy;
But getting cramps instead, and needing change,
A would-be pagan next:
Young Hamlet sat
A guest with five of somewhat riper age
At breakfast with Horatio, a friend
With few opinions, but of faithful heart,
Quick to detect the fibrous spreading roots
Of character that feed men's theories,
Yet cloaking weaknesses with charity

And ready in all service save rebuke.
With ebb of breakfast and the cider-cup
Came high debate: the others seated there
Were Osric, spinner of fine sentences,
A delicate insect creeping over life
Feeding on molecules of floral breath,
And weaving gossamer to trap the sun;
Laertes, ardent, rash, and radical;
Discursive Rosencranz, grave Guildenstern,
And he for whom the social meal was made —
The polished priest, a tolerant listener,
Disposed to give a hearing to the lost,
And breakfast with them ere they went below.

From alpine metaphysic glaciers first
The talk sprang copious; the themes were old,
But so is human breath, so infant eyes,
The daily nurslings of creative light.
Small words held mighty meanings: Matter, Force,
Self, Not-self, Being, Seeming, Space and Time —
Plebeian toilers on the dusty road
Of daily traffic, turned to Genii
And cloudy giants darkening sun and moon.
Creation was reversed in human talk:
None said, "Let Darkness be," but Darkness was;
And in it weltered with Teutonic ease,
An argumentative Leviathan,
Blowing cascades from out his element,
The thunderous Rosencranz, till
"Truce, I beg!"
Said Osric, with nice accent. "I abhor
That battling of the ghosts, that strife of terms
For utmost lack of color, form, and breath,
That tasteless squabbling called Philosophy:
As if a blue-winged butterfly afloat

For just three days above the Italian fields,
Poising in sunshine, fluttering toward its bride,
Should fast and speculate, considering
What were if it were not? or what now is
Instead of that which seems to be itself?
Its deepest wisdom surely were to be
A sipping, marrying, blue-winged butterfly;
Since utmost speculation on itself
Were but a three days' living of worse sort —
A bruising struggle all within the bounds
Of butterfly existence."
"I protest,"
Burst in Laertes, "against arguments
That start with calling me a butterfly,
A bubble, spark, or other metaphor
Which carries your conclusions as a phrase
In quibbling law will carry property.
Put a thin sucker for my human lips
Fed at a mother's breast, who now needs food
That I will earn for her; put bubbles blown
From frothy thinking, for the joy, the love,
The wants, the pity, and the fellowship
(The ocean deeps I might say, were I bent
On bandying metaphors) that make a man —
Why, rhetoric brings within your easy reach
Conclusions worthy of — a butterfly.
The universe, I hold, is no charade,
No acted pun unriddled by a word,
Nor pain a decimal diminishing
With hocus-pocus of a dot or naught.
For those who know it, pain is solely pain:
Not any letters of the alphabet
Wrought syllogistically pattern-wise,
Nor any cluster of fine images,
Nor any missing of their figured dance

By blundering molecules. Analysis
May show you the right physic for the ill,
Teaching the molecules to find their dance,
Instead of sipping at the heart of flowers.
But spare me your analogies, that hold
Such insight as the figure of a crow
And bar of music put to signify
A crowbar."
Said the Priest, "There I agree —
Would add that sacramental grace is grace
Which to be known must first be felt, with all
The strengthening influxes that come by prayer.
I note this passingly — would not delay
The conversation's tenor, save to hint
That taking stand with Rosencranz one sees
Final equivalence of all we name
Our Good and Ill — their difference meanwhile
Being inborn prejudice that plumps you down
An Ego, brings a weight into your scale
Forcing a standard. That resistless weight
Obstinate, irremovable by thought,
Persisting through disproof, an ache, a need
That spaceless stays where sharp analysis
Has shown a plenum filled without it — what
If this, to use your phrase, were just that Being
Not looking solely, grasping from the dark,
Weighing the difference you call Ego? This
Gives you persistence, regulates the flux
With strict relation rooted in the All.
Who is he of your late philosophers
Takes the true name of Being to be Will?
I — nay, the Church objects naught, is content:
Reason has reached its utmost negative,
Physic and metaphysic meet in the inane
And backward shrink to intense prejudice,

Making their absolute and homogene
A loaded relative, a choice to be
Whatever is — supposed: a What is not.
The Church demands no more, has standing room
And basis for her doctrine: this (no more) —
That the strong bias which we name the Soul,
Though fed and clad by dissoluble waves,
Has antecedent quality, and rules
By veto or consent the strife of thought,
Making arbitrament that we call faith."
Here was brief silence, till young Hamlet spoke.
"I crave direction, Father, how to know
The sign of that imperative whose right
To sway my act in face of thronging doubts
Were an oracular gem in price beyond
Urim and Thummim lost to Israel.
That bias of the soul, that conquering die
Loaded with golden emphasis of Will —
How find it where resolve, once made, becomes
The rash exclusion of an opposite
Which draws the stronger as I turn aloof."

"I think I hear a bias in your words,"
The Priest said mildly — "that strong natural bent
Which we call hunger. What more positive
Than appetite? — of spirit or of flesh,
I care not — 'sense of need' were truer phrase.
You hunger for authoritative right,
And yet discern no difference of tones,
No weight of rod that marks imperial rule?
Laertes granting, I will put your case
In analogic form: the doctors hold
Hunger which gives no relish — save caprice
That tasting venison fancies mellow pears —
A symptom of disorder, and prescribe

Strict discipline. Were I physician here
I would prescribe that exercise of soul
Which lies in full obedience: you ask,
Obedience to what? The answer lies
Within the word itself; for how obey
What has no rule, asserts no absolute claim?
Take inclination, taste — why, that is you,
No rule above you. Science, reasoning
On nature's order — they exist and move
Solely by disputation, hold no pledge
Of final consequence, but push the swing
Where Epicurus and the Stoic sit
In endless see-saw. One authority,
And only one, says simply this, Obey:
Place yourself in that current (test it so!)
Of spiritual order where at least
Lies promise of a high communion,
A Head informing members, Life that breathes
With gift of forces over and above
The *plus* of arithmetic interchange.
'The Church too has a body,' you object,
'Can be dissected, put beneath the lens
And shown the merest continuity
Of all existence else beneath the sun.'
I grant you; but the lens will not disprove
A present which eludes it. Take your wit,
Your highest passion, widest-reaching thought:
Show their conditions if you will or can,
But though you saw the final atom-dance
Making each molecule that stands for sign
Of love being present, where is still your love?
How measure that, how certify its weight?
And so I say, the body of the Church
Carries a Presence, promises and gifts
Never disproved — whose argument is found

In lasting failure of the search elsewhere
For what it holds to satisfy man's need.
But I grow lengthy: my excuse must be
Your question, Hamlet, which has probed right through
To the pith of our belief. And I have robbed
Myself of pleasure as a listener.
'T is noon, I see; and my appointment stands
For half-past twelve with Voltimand. Good-by."

Brief parting, brief regret — sincere, but quenched
In fumes of best Havana, which consoles
For lack of other certitude. Then said,
Mildly sarcastic, quiet Guildenstern:
"I marvel how the Father gave new charm
To weak conclusions: I was half convinced
The poorest reasoner made the finest man,
And held his logic lovelier for its limp."

"I fain would hear," said Hamlet, "how you find
A stronger footing than the Father gave.
How base your self-resistance save on faith
In some invisible Order, higher Right
Than changing impulse. What does Reason bid?
To take as fullest rationality
What offers best solution: so the Church.
Science, detecting hydrogen aflame
Outside our firmament, leaves mystery
Whole and untouched beyond; nay, in our blood
And in the potent atoms of each germ
The Secret lives — envelops, penetrates
Whatever sense perceives or thought divines.
Science, whose soul is explanation, halts
With hostile front at mystery. The Church
Takes mystery as her empire, brings its wealth
Of possibility to fill the void

'Twixt contradictions — warrants so a faith
Defying sense and all its ruthless train
Of arrogant 'Therefores.' Science with her lens
Dissolves the Forms that made the other half
Of all our love, which thenceforth widowed lives
To gaze with maniac stare at what is not.
The Church explains not, governs — feeds resolve
By vision fraught with heart-experience
And human yearning."

"Ay," said Guildenstern,
With friendly nod, "the Father, I can see,
Has caught you up in his air-chariot.
His thought takes rainbow-bridges, out of reach
By solid obstacles, evaporates
The coarse and common into subtilties,
Insists that what is real in the Church
Is something out of evidence, and begs
(Just in parenthesis) you 'll never mind
What stares you in the face and bruises you.
Why, by his method I could justify
Each superstition and each tyranny
That ever rode upon the back of man,
Pretending fitness for his sole defence
Against life's evil. How can aught subsist
That holds no theory of gain or good?
Despots with terror in their red right hand
Must argue good to helpers and themselves,
Must let submission hold a core of gain
To make their slaves choose life. Their theory,
Abstracting inconvenience of racks,
Whip-lashes, dragonnades and all things coarse
Inherent in the fact or concrete mass,
Presents the pure idea — utmost good
Secured by Order only to be found
In strict subordination, hierarchy

Of forces where, by nature's law, the strong
Has rightful empire, rule of weaker proved
Mere dissolution. What can you object?
The Inquisition — if you turn away
From narrow notice how the scent of gold
Has guided sense of damning heresy —
The Inquisition is sublime, is love
Hindering the spread of poison in men's souls:
The flames are nothing: only smaller pain
To hinder greater, or the pain of one
To save the many, such as throbs at heart
Of every system born into the world.
So of the Church as high communion
Of Head with members, fount of spirit force
Beyond the calculus, and carrying proof
In her sole power to satisfy man's need:
That seems ideal truth as clear as lines
That, necessary though invisible, trace
The balance of the planets and the sun —
Until I find a hitch in that last claim.
'To satisfy man's need.' Sir, that depends:
We settle first the measure of man's need
Before we grant capacity to fill.
John, James, or Thomas, you may satisfy:
But since you choose ideals I demand
Your Church shall satisfy ideal man,
His utmost reason and his utmost love.
And say these rest a-hungered — find no scheme
Content them both, but hold the world accursed,
A Calvary where Reason mocks at Love,
And Love forsaken sends out orphan cries
Hopeless of answer; still the soul remains
Larger, diviner than your half-way Church,
Which racks your reason into false consent,
And soothes your Love with sops of selfishness."

"There I am with you," cried Laertes. "What
To me are any dictates, though they came
With thunders from the Mount, if still within
I see a higher Right, a higher Good
Compelling love and worship? Though the earth
Held force electric to discern and kill
Each thinking rebel — what is martyrdom
But death-defying utterance of belief,
Which being mine remains my truth supreme
Though solitary as the throb of pain
Lying outside the pulses of the world?
Obedience is good: ay, but to what?
And for what ends? For say that I rebel
Against your rule as devilish, or as rule
Of thunder-guiding powers that deny
Man's highest benefit: rebellion then
Were strict obedience to another rule
Which bids me flout your thunder."

"Lo you now!"
Said Osric, delicately, "how you come,
Laertes mine, with all your warring zeal
As Python-slayer of the present age —
Cleansing all social swamps by darting rays
Of dubious doctrine, hot with energy
Of private judgment and disgust for doubt —
To state my thesis, which you most abhor
When sung in Daphnis-notes beneath the pines
To gentle rush of waters. Your belief —
In essence what is it but simply Taste?
I urge with you exemption from all claims
That come from other than my proper will,
An Ultimate within to balance yours,
A solid meeting you, excluding you,
Till you show fuller force by entering
My spiritual space and crushing Me

To a subordinate complement of You:
Such ultimate must stand alike for all.
Preach your crusade, then: all will join who like
The hurly-burly of aggressive creeds;
Still your unpleasant Ought, your itch to choose
What grates upon the sense, is simply Taste,
Differs, I think, from mine (permit the word,
Discussion forces it) in being bad."

The tone was too polite to breed offence,
Showing a tolerance of what was "bad"
Becoming courtiers. Louder Rosencranz
Took up the ball with rougher movement, wont
To show contempt for doting reasoners
Who hugged some reasons with a preference,
As warm Laertes did: he gave five puffs
Intolerantly sceptical, then said:
"Your human good, which you would make supreme,
How do you know it? Has it shown its face
In adamantine type, with features clear,
As this republic, or that monarchy?
As federal grouping, or municipal?
Equality, or finely shaded lines
Of social difference? ecstatic whirl
And draught intense of passionate joy and pain,
Or sober self-control that starves its youth
And lives to wonder what the world calls joy?
Is it in sympathy that shares men's pangs,
Or in cool brains that can explain them well?
Is it in labor or in laziness?
In training for the tug of rivalry
To be admired, or in the admiring soul?
In risk or certitude? In battling rage
And hardy challenges of Protean luck,
Or in a sleek and rural apathy

Full fed with sameness? Pray define your Good
Beyond rejection by majority;
Next, how it may subsist without the Ill
Which seems its only outline. Show a world
Of pleasure not resisted; or a world
Of pressure equalized, yet various
In action formative; for that will serve
As illustration of your human good —
Which at its perfecting (your goal of hope)
Will not be straight extinct, or fall to sleep
In the deep bosom of the Unchangeable.
What will you work for, then, and call it good
With full and certain vision — good for aught
Save partial ends which happen to be yours?
How will you get your stringency to bind
Thought or desire in demonstrated tracks
Which are but waves within a balanced whole?
Is 'relative' the magic word that turns
Your flux mercurial of good to gold?
Why, that analysis at which you rage
As anti-social force that sweeps you down
The world in one cascade of molecules,
Is brother 'relative' — and grins at you
Like any convict whom you thought to send
Outside society, till this enlarged
And meant New England and Australia too.
The Absolute is your shadow, and the space
Which you say might be real were you milled
To curves pellicular, the thinnest thin,
Equation of no thickness, is still you."

"Abstracting all that makes him clubbable,"
Horatio interposed. But Rosencranz,
Deaf as the angry turkey-cock whose ears
Are plugged by swollen tissues when he scolds

At men's pretensions: "Pooh, your 'Relative'
Shuts you in, hopeless, with your progeny
As in a Hunger-tower; your social good,
Like other deities by turn supreme,
Is transient reflex of a prejudice,
Anthology of causes and effects
To suit the mood of fanatics who lead
The mood of tribes or nations. I admit
If you could show a sword, nay, chance of sword
Hanging conspicuous to their inward eyes
With edge so constant threatening as to sway
All greed and lust by terror; and a law
Clear-writ and proven as the law supreme
Which that dread sword enforces — then your Right,
Duty, or social Good, were it once brought
To common measure with the potent law,
Would dip the scale, would put unchanging marks
Of wisdom or of folly on each deed,
And warrant exhortation. Until then,
Where is your standard or criterion?
'What always, everywhere, by all men' — why,
That were but Custom, and your system needs
Ideals never yet incorporate,
The imminent doom of Custom. Can you find
Appeal beyond the sentience in each man?
Frighten the blind with scarecrows? raise an awe
Of things unseen where appetite commands
Chambers of imagery in the soul
At all its avenues? — You chant your hymns
To Evolution, on your altar lay
A sacred egg called Progress: have you proved
A Best unique where all is relative,
And where each change is loss as well as gain?
The age of healthy Saurians, well supplied
With heat and prey, will balance well enough

A human age where maladies are strong
And pleasures feeble; wealth a monster gorged
'Mid hungry populations; intellect
Aproned in laboratories, bent on proof
That *this* is *that* and both are good for naught
Save feeding error through a weary life;
While Art and Poesy struggle like poor ghosts
To hinder cock-crow and the dreadful light,
Lurking in darkness and the charnel-house,
Or like two stalwart graybeards, imbecile
With limbs still active, playing at belief,
That hunt the slipper, foot-ball, hide-and-seek,
Are sweetly merry, donning pinafores
And lisping emulously in their speech.
O human race! Is this then all thy gain?—
Working at disproof, playing at belief,
Debate on causes, distaste of effects,
Power to transmute all elements, and lack
Of any power to sway the fatal skill
And make thy lot aught else than rigid doom?
The Saurians were better. — Guildenstern,
Pass me the taper. Still the human curse
Has mitigation in the best cigars."
Then swift Laertes, not without a glare
Of leonine wrath: "I thank thee for that word
That one confession, were I Socrates,
Should force you onward till you ran your head
At your own image — flatly gave the lie
To all your blasphemy of that human good
Which bred and nourished you to sit at ease
And learnedly deny it. Say the world
Groans ever with the pangs of doubtful births;
Say, life 's a poor donation at the best—
Wisdom a yearning after nothingness —
Nature's great vision and the thrill supreme

Of thought-fed passion but a weary play —
I argue not against you. Who can prove
Wit to be witty when with deeper ground
Dulness intuitive declares wit dull?
If life is worthless to you — why, it is.
You only know how little love you feel
To give you fellowship, how little force
Responsive to the quality of things.
Then end your life, throw off the unsought yoke.
If not — if you remain to taste cigars,
Choose racy diction, perorate at large
With tacit scorn of meaner men who win
No wreath or tripos — then admit at least
A possible Better in the seeds of earth;
Acknowledge debt to that laborious life
Which, sifting evermore the mingled seeds,
Testing the Possible with patient skill,
And daring ill in presence of a good
For futures to inherit, made your lot
One you would choose rather than end it, nay,
Rather than, say, some twenty million lots
Of fellow-Britons toiling all to make
That nation, that community, whereon
You feed and thrive and talk philosophy.
I am no optimist whose faith must hang
On hard pretence that pain is beautiful
And agony explained for men at ease
By virtue's exercise in pitying it.
But this I hold: that he who takes one gift
Made for him by the hopeful work of man,
Who tastes sweet bread, walks where he will unarmed,
His shield and warrant the invisible law,
Who owns a hearth and household charities,
Who clothes his body and his sentient soul
With skill and thoughts of men, and yet denies

A human good worth toiling for, is cursed
With worse negation than the poet feigned
In Mephistopheles. The Devil spins
His wire-drawn argument against all good
With sense of brimstone as his private lot,
And never drew a solace from the Earth."

Laertes fuming paused, and Guildenstern
Took up with cooler skill the fusillade:
"I meet your deadliest challenge, Rosencranz:
Where get, you say, a binding law, a rule
Enforced by sanction, an Ideal throned
With thunder in its hand? I answer, there
Whence every faith and rule has drawn its force
Since human consciousness awaking owned
An Outward, whose unconquerable sway
Resisted first and then subdued desire
By pressure of the dire Impossible
Urging to possible ends the active soul
And shaping so its terror and its love.
Why, you have said it — threats and promises
Depend on each man's sentience for their force:
All sacred rules, imagined or revealed,
Can have no form or potency apart
From the percipient and emotive mind.
God, duty, love, submission, fellowship,
Must first be framed in man, as music is,
Before they live outside him as a law.
And still they grow and shape themselves anew,
With fuller concentration in their life
Of inward and of outward energies
Blending to make the last result called Man,
Which means, not this or that philosopher
Looking through beauty into blankness, not
The swindler who has sent his fruitful lie

By the last telegram: it means the tide
Of needs reciprocal, toil, trust, and love —
The surging multitude of human claims
Which make "a presence not to be put by"
Above the horizon of the general soul.
Is inward Reason shrunk to subtleties,
And inward wisdom pining passion-starved? —
The outward Reason has the world in store,
Regenerates passion with the stress of want,
Regenerates knowledge with discovery,
Shows sly rapacious Self a blunderer,
Widens dependence, knits the social whole
In sensible relation more defined.
Do Boards and dirty-handed millionnaires
Govern the planetary system? — sway
The pressure of the Universe? — decide
That man henceforth shall retrogress to ape,
Emptied of every sympathetic thrill
The All has wrought in him? dam up henceforth
The flood of human claims as private force
To turn their wheels and make a private hell
For fish-pond to their mercantile domain?
What are they but a parasitic growth
On the vast real and ideal world
Of man and nature blent in one divine?
Why, take your closing dirge — say evil grows
And good is dwindling; science mere decay,
Mere dissolution of ideal wholes
Which through the ages past alone have made
The earth and firmament of human faith;
Say, the small arc of Being we call man
Is near its mergence, what seems growing life
Naught but a hurrying change toward lower types,
The ready rankness of degeneracy.
Well, they who mourn for the world's dying good

May take their common sorrows for a rock,
On it erect religion and a church,
A worship, rites, and passionate piety —
The worship of the Best though crucified
And God-forsaken in its dying pangs;
The sacramental rites of fellowship
In common woe; visions that purify
Through admiration and despairing love
Which keep their spiritual life intact
Beneath the murderous clutches of disproof
And feed a martyr-strength."

"Religion high!"
(Rosencranz here) "But with communicants
Few as the cedars upon Lebanon —
A child might count them. What the world demands
Is faith coercive of the multitude."

"Tush, Guildenstern, you granted him too much,"
Burst in Laertes; "I will never grant
One inch of law to feeble blasphemies
Which hold no higher ratio to life —
Full vigorous human life that peopled earth
And wrought and fought and loved and bravely died —
Than the sick morning glooms of debauchees.
Old nations breed old children, wizened babes
Whose youth is languid and incredulous,
Weary of life without the will to die;
Their passions visionary appetites
Of bloodless spectres wailing that the world
For lack of substance slips from out their grasp;
Their thoughts the withered husks of all things dead,
Holding no force of germs instinct with life,
Which never hesitates but moves and grows.
Yet hear them boast in screams their godlike ill,

Excess of knowing! Fie on you, Rosencranz!
You lend your brains and fine-dividing tongue
For bass-notes to this shrivelled crudity,
This immature decrepitude that strains
To fill our ears and claim the prize of strength
For mere unmanliness. Out on them all!—
Wits, puling minstrels, and philosophers,
Who living softly prate of suicide,
And suck the commonwealth to feed their ease
While they vent epigrams and threnodies,
Mocking or wailing all the eager work
Which makes that public store whereon they feed.
Is wisdom flattened sense and mere distaste?
Why, any superstition warm with love,
Inspired with purpose, wild with energy
That streams resistless through its ready frame,
Has more of human truth within its life
Than souls that look through color into naught—
Whose brain, too unimpassioned for delight,
Has feeble ticklings of a vanity
Which finds the universe beneath its mark,
And scorning the blue heavens as merely blue
Can only say, 'What then?'—pre-eminent
In wondrous want of likeness to their kind,
Founding that worship of sterility
Whose one supreme is vacillating Will
Which makes the Light, then says, ''T were better not.'"

Here rash Laertes brought his Handel-strain
As of some angry Polypheme, to pause;
And Osric, shocked at ardors out of taste,
Relieved the audience with a tenor voice
And delicate delivery.

"For me,
I range myself in line with Rosencranz

Against all schemes, religious or profane,
That flaunt a Good as pretext for a lash
To flog us all who have the better taste,
Into conformity, requiring me
At peril of the thong and sharp disgrace
To care how mere Philistines pass their lives;
Whether the English pauper-total grows
From one to two before the naughts; how far
Teuton will outbreed Roman; if the class
Of proletaires will make a federal band
To bind all Europe and America,
Throw, in their wrestling, every government,
Snatch the world's purse and keep the guillotine:
Or else (admitting these are casualties)
Driving my soul with scientific hail
That shuts the landscape out with particles;
Insisting that the Palingenesis
Means telegraphs and measure of the rate
At which the stars move — nobody knows where.
So far, my Rosencranz, we are at one.
But not when you blaspheme the life of Art,
The sweet perennial youth of Poesy,
Which asks no logic but its sensuous growth,
No right but loveliness; which fearless strolls
Betwixt the burning mountain and the sea,
Reckless of earthquake and the lava stream,
Filling its hour with beauty. It knows naught
Of bitter strife, denial, grim resolve,
Sour resignation, busy emphasis
Of fresh illusions named the new-born True,
Old Error's latest child; but as a lake
Images all things, yet within its depths
Dreams them all lovelier — thrills with sound
And makes a harp of plenteous liquid chords —
So Art or Poesy: we its votaries

Are the Olympians, fortunately born
From the elemental mixture; 't is our lot
To pass more swiftly than the Delian God,
But still the earth breaks into flowers for us,
And mortal sorrows when they reach our ears
Are dying falls to melody divine.
Hatred, war, vice, crime, sin, those human storms,
Cyclones, floods, what you will — outbursts of force —
Feed art with contrast, give the grander touch
To the master's pencil and the poet's song,
Serve as Vesuvian fires or navies tossed
On yawning waters, which when viewed afar
Deepen the calm sublime of those choice souls
Who keep the heights of poesy and turn
A fleckless mirror to the various world,
Giving its many-named and fitful flux
An imaged, harmless, spiritual life,
With pure selection, native to art's frame,
Of beauty only, save its minor scale
Of ill and pain to give the ideal joy
A keener edge. This is a mongrel globe;
All finer being wrought from its coarse earth
Is but accepted privilege: what else
Your boasted virtue, which proclaims itself
A good above the average consciousness?
Nature exists by partiality
(Each planet's poise must carry two extremes
With verging breadths of minor wretchedness):
We are her favorites and accept our wings.
For your accusal, Rosencranz, that art
Shares in the dread and weakness of the time,
I hold it null; since art or poesy pure,
Being blameless by all standards save her own,
Takes no account of modern or antique
In morals, science, or philosophy:

No dull elenchus makes a yoke for her,
Whose law and measure are the sweet consent
Of sensibilities that move apart
From rise or fall of systems, states or creeds —
Apart from what Philistines call man's weal."

"Ay, we all know those votaries of the Muse
Ravished with singing till they quite forgot
Their manhood, sang, and gaped, and took no food,
Then died of emptiness, and for reward
Lived on as grasshoppers" — Laertes thus:
But then he checked himself as one who feels
His muscles dangerous, and Guildenstern
Filled up the pause with calmer confidence.

"You use your wings, my Osric, poise yourself
Safely outside all reach of argument,
Then dogmatize at will (a method known
To ancient women and philosophers,
Nay, to Philistines whom you most abhor);
Else, could an arrow reach you, I should ask
Whence came taste, beauty, sensibilities
Refined to preference infallible?
Doubtless, ye 're gods — these odors ye inhale,
A sacrificial scent. But how, I pray,
Are odors made, if not by gradual change
Of sense or substance? Is your beautiful
A seedless, rootless flower, or has it grown
With human growth, which means the rising sun
Of human struggle, order, knowledge? — sense
Trained to a fuller record, more exact —
To truer guidance of each passionate force?
Get me your roseate flesh without the blood;
Get fine aromas without structure wrought
From simpler being into manifold:

Then and then only flaunt your Beautiful
As what can live apart from thought, creeds, states,
Which mean life's structure. Osric, I beseech —
The infallible should be more catholic —
Join in a war-dance with the cannibals,
Hear Chinese music, love a face tattooed,
Give adoration to a pointed skull,
And think the Hindu Siva looks divine:
'T is art, 't is poesy. Say, you object:
How came you by that lofty dissidence,
If not through changes in the social man
Widening his consciousness from Here and Now
To larger wholes beyond the reach of sense;
Controlling to a fuller harmony
The thrill of passion and the rule of fact;
And paling false ideals in the light
Of full-rayed sensibilities which blend
Truth and desire? Taste, beauty, what are they
But the soul's choice toward perfect bias wrought
By finer balance of a fuller growth —
Sense brought to subtlest metamorphosis
Through love, thought, joy — the general human store
Which grows from all life's functions? As the plant
Holds its corolla, purple, delicate,
Solely as outflush of that energy
Which moves transformingly in root and branch."

Guildenstern paused, and Hamlet quivering
Since Osric spoke, in transit imminent
From catholic striving into laxity,
Ventured his word. "Seems to me, Guildenstern,
Your argument, though shattering Osric's point
That sensibilities can move apart
From social order, yet has not annulled
His thesis that the life of poesy

(Admitting it must grow from out the whole)
Has separate functions, a transfigured realm
Freed from the rigors of the practical,
Where what is hidden from the grosser world —
Stormed down by roar of engines and the shouts
Of eager concourse — rises beauteous
As voice of water-drops in sapphire caves;
A realm where finest spirits have free sway
In exquisite selection, uncontrolled
By hard material necessity
Of cause and consequence. For you will grant
The Ideal has discoveries which ask
No test, no faith, save that we joy in them:
A new-found continent, with spreading lands
Where pleasure charters all, where virtue, rank,
Use, right, and truth have but one name, Delight
Thus Art's creations, when etherealized
To least admixture of the grosser fact
Delight may stamp as highest."

"Possible!"
Said Guildenstern, with touch of weariness,
"But then we might dispute of what is gross,
What high, what low."

"Nay," said Laertes, "ask
The mightiest makers who have reigned, still reign
Within the ideal realm. See if their thought
Be drained of practice and the thick warm blood
Of hearts that beat in action various
Through the wide drama of the struggling world.
Good-by, Horatio."

Each now said "Good-by."
Such breakfast, such beginning of the day

Is more than half the whole. The sun was hot
On southward branches of the meadow elms,
The shadows slowly farther crept and veered
Like changing memories, and Hamlet strolled
Alone and dubious on the empurpled path
Between the waving grasses of new June
Close by the stream where well-compacted boats
Were moored or moving with a lazy creak
To the soft dip of oars. All sounds were light
As tiny silver bells upon the robes
Of hovering silence. Birds made twitterings
That seemed but Silence' self o'erfull of love.
'T was invitation all to sweet repose;
And Hamlet, drowsy with the mingled draughts
Of cider and conflicting sentiments,
Chose a green couch and watched with half-closed eyes
The meadow-road, the stream and dreamy lights,
Until they merged themselves in sequence strange
With undulating ether, time, the soul,
The will supreme, the individual claim,
The social Ought, the lyrist's liberty,
Democritus, Pythagoras, in talk
With Anselm, Darwin, Comte, and Schopenhauer,
The poets rising slow from out their tombs
Summoned as arbiters — that border-world
Of dozing, ere the sense is fully locked.

And then he dreamed a dream so luminous
He woke (he says) convinced; but what it taught
Withholds as yet. Perhaps those graver shades
Admonished him that visions told in haste
Part with their virtues to the squandering lips
And leave the soul in wider emptiness.

April, 1874.

TWO LOVERS.

TWO lovers by a moss-grown spring:
They leaned soft cheeks together there,
Mingled the dark and sunny hair,
And heard the wooing thrushes sing.
O budding time!
O love's blest prime!

Two wedded from the portal stept:
The bells made happy carollings,
The air was soft as fanning wings,
White petals on the pathway slept.
O pure-eyed bride!
O tender pride!

Two faces o'er a cradle bent:
Two hands above the head were locked:
These pressed each other while they rocked,
Those watched a life that love had sent.
O solemn hour!
O hidden power!

Two parents by the evening fire:
The red light fell about their knees
On heads that rose by slow degrees
Like buds upon the lily spire.
O patient life!
O tender strife!



"Two lovers by a moss-grown spring."

The two still sat together there,
  The red light shone about their knees;
  But all the heads by slow degrees
Had gone and left that lonely pair.
  O voyage fast!
  O vanished past!

The red light shone upon the floor
  And made the space between them wide;
  They drew their chairs up side by side,
Their pale cheeks joined, and said, "Once more!"
  O memories!
  O past that is!

1866.

SELF AND LIFE.

SELF.

CHANGEFUL comrade, Life of mine
Before we two must part,
I will tell thee, thou shalt say,
What thou hast been and art.
Ere I lose my hold of thee
Justify thyself to me.

LIFE.

I was thy warmth upon thy mother's knee
When light and love within her eyes were one;
We laughed together by the laurel-tree,
Culling warm daisies 'neath the sloping sun;

We heard the chickens' lazy croon,
Where the trellised woodbines grew,
And all the summer afternoon
Mystic gladness o'er thee threw.
Was it person? Was it thing?
Was it touch or whispering?
It was bliss and it was I:
Bliss was what thou knew'st me by.

SELF.

Soon I knew thee more by Fear
And sense of what was not,
Haunting all I held most dear;
I had a double lot:
Ardor, cheated with alloy,
Wept the more for dreams of joy.

LIFE.

Remember how thy ardor's magic sense
  Made poor things rich to thee and small things great;
How hearth and garden, field and bushy fence,
  Were thy own eager love incorporate;

And how the solemn, splendid Past
  O'er thy early widened earth
Made grandeur, as on sunset cast
  Dark elms near take mighty girth.
    Hands and feet were tiny still
    When we knew the historic thrill,
    Breathed deep breath in heroes dead,
    Tasted the immortals' bread.

SELF.

Seeing what I might have been
  Reproved the thing I was,
Smoke on heaven's clearest sheen,
  The speck within the rose.
By revered ones' frailties stung
Reverence was with anguish wrung.

LIFE.

But all thy anguish and thy discontent
  Was growth of mine, the elemental strife
Toward feeling manifold with vision blent
  To wider thought: I was no vulgar life

That, like the water-mirrored ape,
  Not discerns the thing it sees,
Nor knows its own in others' shape,
  Railing, scorning, at its ease.

Half man's truth must hidden lie
If unlit by Sorrow's eye.
I by Sorrow wrought in thee
Willing pain of ministry.

SELF.

Slowly was the lesson taught
Through passion, error, care;
Insight was the loathing fraught
And effort with despair.
Written on the wall I saw
"Bow!" I knew, not loved, the law.

LIFE.

But then I brought a love that wrote within
The law of gratitude, and made thy heart
Beat to the heavenly tune of seraphim
Whose only joy in having is, to impart:

Till thou, poor Self — despite thy ire,
Wrestling 'gainst my mingled share,
Thy faults, hard falls, and vain desire
Still to be what others were —
Filled, o'erflowed with tenderness
Seeming more as thou wert less,
Knew me through that anguish past
As a fellowship more vast.

SELF.

Yea, I embrace thee, changeful Life!
Far-sent, unchosen mate!
Self and thou, no more at strife,
Shall wed in hallowed state.
Willing spousals now shall prove
Life is justified by love.

"SWEET EVENINGS COME AND GO, LOVE."

"La noche buena se viene,
La noche buena se va,
Y nosotros nos iremos
Y no volveremos mas."

— *Old Villancico.*

SWEET evenings come and go, love,
They came and went of yore:
This evening of our life, love,
Shall go and come no more.

When we have passed away, love,
All things will keep their name;
But yet no life on earth, love,
With ours will be same.

The daisies will be there, love,
The stars in heaven will shine:
I shall not feel thy wish, love,
Nor thou my hand in thine.

A better time will come, love,
And better souls be born:
I would not be the best, love,
To leave thee now forlorn.

THE DEATH OF MOSES.

MOSES, who spake with God as with his friend,
And ruled his people with the twofold power
Of wisdom that can dare and still be meek,
Was writing his last word, the sacred name
Unutterable of that Eternal Will
Which was and is and evermore shall be.
Yet was his task not finished, for the flock
Needed its shepherd and the life-taught sage
Leaves no successor; but to chosen men,
The rescuers and guides of Israel,
A death was given called the Death of Grace,
Which freed them from the burden of the flesh
But left them rulers of the multitude
And loved companions of the lonely. This
Was God's last gift to Moses, this the hour
When soul must part from self and be but soul

God spake to Gabriel, the messenger
Of mildest death that draws the parting life
Gently, as when a little rosy child
Lifts up its lips from off the bowl of milk
And so draws forth a curl that dipped its gold
In the soft white — thus Gabriel draws the soul.
"Go bring the soul of Moses unto me!"
And the awe-stricken angel answered, "Lord,
How shall I dare to take his life who lives
Sole of his kind, not to be likened once
In all the generations of the earth?"

Then God called Michaël, him of pensive brow,
Snow-vest and flaming sword, who knows and acts:
"Go bring the spirit of Moses unto me!"
But Michaël with such grief as angels feel,
Loving the mortals whom they succor, pled:
"Almighty, spare me; it was I who taught
Thy servant Moses; he is part of me
As I of thy deep secrets, knowing them."

Then God called Zamaël, the terrible,
The angel of fierce death, of agony
That comes in battle and in pestilence
Remorseless, sudden or with lingering throes.
And Zamaël, his raiment and broad wings
Blood-tinctured, the dark lustre of his eyes
Shrouding the red, fell like the gathering night
Before the prophet. But that radiance
Won from the heavenly presence in the mount
Gleamed on the prophet's brow and dazzling pierced
Its conscious opposite: the angel turned
His murky gaze aloof and inly said:
"An angel this, deathless to angel's stroke."

But Moses felt the subtly nearing dark:
"Who art thou? and what wilt thou?" Zamaël then:
"I am God's reaper; through the fields of life
I gather ripened and unripened souls
Both willing and unwilling. And I come
Now to reap thee." But Moses cried,
Firm as a seer who waits the trusted sign:
"Reap thou the fruitless plant and common herb—
Not him who from the womb was sanctified
To teach the law of purity and love."
And Zamaël baffled from his errand fled.

But Moses, pausing, in the air serene
Heard now that mystic whisper, far yet near,
The all-penetrating Voice, that said to him,
"Moses, the hour is come and thou must die."
"Lord, I obey; but thou rememberest
How thou, Ineffable, didst take me once
Within thy orb of light untouched by death."
Then the voice answered, "Be no more afraid:
With me shall be thy death and burial."
So Moses waited, ready now to die.

And the Lord came, invisible as a thought,
Three angels gleaming on his secret track,
Prince Michaël, Zagaël, Gabriel, charged to guard
The soul-forsaken body as it fell
And bear it to the hidden sepulchre
Denied forever to the search of man.
And the Voice said to Moses: "Close thine eyes."
He closed them. "Lay thine hand upon thine heart,
And draw thy feet together." He obeyed.
And the Lord said, "O spirit! child of mine!
A hundred years and twenty thou hast dwelt
Within this tabernacle wrought of clay.
This is the end: come forth and flee to heaven."

But the grieved soul with plaintive pleading cried,
"I love this body with a clinging love:
The courage fails me, Lord, to part from it."

"O child, come forth! for thou shalt dwell with me
About the immortal throne where seraphs joy
In growing vision and in growing love."

Yet hesitating, fluttering, like the bird
With young wing weak and dubious, the soul

Stayed. But behold! upon the death-dewed lips
A kiss descended, pure, unspeakable —
The bodiless Love without embracing Love
That lingered in the body, drew it forth
With heavenly strength and carried it to heaven.

But now beneath the sky the watchers all,
Angels that keep the homes of Israel
Or on high purpose wander o'er the world
Leading the Gentiles, felt a dark eclipse:
The greatest ruler among men was gone.
And from the westward sea was heard a wail,
A dirge as from the isles of Javanim,
Crying, "Who now is left upon the earth
Like him to teach the right and smite the wrong?"
And from the East, far o'er the Syrian waste,
Came slowlier, sadlier, the answering dirge:
"No prophet like him lives or shall arise
In Israel or the world forevermore."

But Israel waited, looking toward the mount,
Till with the deepening eve the elders came
Saying, "His burial is hid with God.
We stood far off and saw the angels lift
His corpse aloft until they seemed a star
That burnt itself away within the sky."

The people answered with mute orphaned gaze
Looking for what had vanished evermore.
Then through the gloom without them and within
The spirit's shaping light, mysterious speech,
Invisible Will wrought clear in sculptured sound,
The thought-begotten daughter of the voice,
Thrilled on their listening sense: "He has no tomb.
He dwells not with you dead, but lives as Law."

ARION.

(Herod. i. 24.)

ARION, whose melodic soul
Taught the dithyramb to roll
Like forest fires, and sing
Olympian suffering,

Had carried his diviner lore
From Corinth to the sister shore
Where Greece could largelier be,
Branching o'er Italy.

Then weighted with his glorious name
And bags of gold, aboard he came
'Mid harsh seafaring men
To Corinth bound again.

The sailors eyed the bags and thought:
"The gold is good, the man is naught —
And who shall track the wave
That opens for his grave?"

With brawny arms and cruel eyes
They press around him where he lies
In sleep beside his lyre,
Hearing the Muses quire.

He waked and saw this wolf-faced Death
Breaking the dream that filled his breath
With inspiration strong
Of yet unchanted song.

"Take, take my gold and let me live!"
He prayed, as kings do when they give
Their all with royal will,
Holding born kingship still.

To rob the living they refuse,
One death or other he must choose,
Either the watery pall
Or wounds and burial.

"My solemn robe then let me don,
Give me high space to stand upon,
That dying I may pour
A song unsung before."

It pleased them well to grant this prayer,
To hear for naught how it might fare
With men who paid their gold
For what a poet sold.

In flowing stole, his eyes aglow
With inward fire, he neared the prow
And took his god-like stand,
The cithara in hand.

The wolfish men all shrank aloof,
And feared this singer might be proof
Against their murderous power,
After his lyric hour.

But he, in liberty of song,
Fearless of death or other wrong,
With full spondaic toll
Poured forth his mighty soul:

Poured forth the strain his dream had taught,
A nome with lofty passion fraught
Such as makes battles won
On fields of Marathon.

The last long vowels trembled then
As awe within those wolfish men:
They said, with mutual stare,
Some god was present there.

But lo! Arion leaped on high,
Ready, his descant done, to die;
Not asking, "Is it well?"
Like a pierced eagle fell.

1873.

"OH MAY I JOIN THE CHOIR INVISIBLE."

Longum illud tempus, quum non ero, magis me movet, quam hoc exiguum. — CICERO, ad Att., xii. 18.

OH may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence: live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars
And with their mild persistence urge man's search
To vaster issues.

So to live is heaven:
To make undying music in the world,
Breathing as beauteous order that controls
With growing sway the growing life of man.
So we inherit that sweet purity
For which we struggled, failed, and agonized
With widening retrospect that bred despair.
Rebellious flesh that would not be subdued,
A vicious parent shaming still its child
Poor anxious penitence, is quick dissolved;
Its discords, quenched by meeting harmonies,
Die in the large and charitable air.
And all our rarer, better, truer self,
That sobbed religiously in yearning song,
That watched to ease the burden of the world,

Laboriously tracing what must be,
And what may yet be better — saw within
A worthier image for the sanctuary,
And shaped it forth before the multitude
Divinely human, raising worship so
To higher reverence more mixed with love —
That better self shall live till human Time
Shall fold its eyelids, and the human sky
Be gathered like a scroll within the tomb
Unread forever.

This is life to come,
Which martyred men have made more glorious
For us who strive to follow. May I reach
That purest heaven, be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardor, feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty —
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense.
So shall I join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world.

1867.

SCENES OF CLERICAL LIFE.

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SCENES OF CLERICAL LIFE.

THE SAD FORTUNES OF THE REVEREND AMOS BARTON.

VOL. IV.

THE SAD FORTUNES OF THE REVEREND AMOS BARTON.

CHAPTER I.

Shepperton Church was a very different-looking building five-and-twenty years ago. To be sure, its substantial stone tower looks at you through its intelligent eye, the clock, with the friendly expression of former days; but in everything else what changes! Now there is a wide span of slated roof flanking the old steeple; the windows are tall and symmetrical; the outer doors are resplendent with oak-graining, the inner doors reverentially noiseless with a garment of red baize; and the walls, you are convinced, no lichen will ever again effect a settlement on — they are smooth and innutrient as the summit of the Rev. Amos Barton's head, after ten years of baldness and supererogatory soap. Pass through the baize doors and you will see the nave filled with well-shaped benches, understood to be free seats; while in certain eligible corners, less directly under the fire of the clergyman's eye, there are pews reserved for the Shepperton gentility. Ample galleries are supported on iron pillars, and in one of them stands the crowning glory, the very clasp or aigrette of Shepperton church-adornment — namely, an organ, not very much out of repair, on which a collector of small rents, differentiated by the force of circumstances into an organist, will accompany the alacrity of your departure after the blessing, by a sacred minuet or an easy "Gloria."

Immense improvement! says the well-regulated mind, which unintermittingly rejoices in the New Police, the Tithe Com-

mutation Act, the penny-post, and all guarantees of human advancement, and has no moments when conservative-reforming intellect takes a nap, while imagination does a little Toryism by the sly, revelling in regret that dear, old, brown, crumbling, picturesque inefficiency is everywhere giving place to spick-and-span new-painted, new-varnished efficiency, which will yield endless diagrams, plans, elevations, and sections, but alas! no picture. Mine, I fear, is not a well-regulated mind: it has an occasional tenderness for old abuses; it lingers with a certain fondness over the days of nasal clerks and top-booted parsons, and has a sigh for the departed shades of vulgar errors. So it is not surprising that I recall with a fond sadness Shepperton Church as it was in the old days, with its outer coat of rough stucco, its red-tiled roof, its heterogeneous windows patched with desultory bits of painted glass, and its little flight of steps with their wooden rail running up the outer wall, and leading to the school-children's gallery.

Then inside, what dear old quaintnesses! which I began to look at with delight, even when I was so crude a member of the congregation, that my nurse found it necessary to provide for the reinforcement of my devotional patience by smuggling bread-and-butter into the sacred edifice. There was the chancel, guarded by two little cherubim looking uncomfortably squeezed between arch and wall, and adorned with the escutcheons of the Oldinport family, which showed me inexhaustible possibilities of meaning in their blood-red hands, their death's-heads and cross-bones, their leopards' paws, and Maltese crosses. There were inscriptions on the panels of the singing-gallery, telling of benefactions to the poor of Shepperton, with an involuted elegance of capitals and final flourishes, which my alphabetic erudition traced with ever-new delight. No benches in those days; but huge roomy pews, round which devout church-goers sat during "lessons," trying to look anywhere else than into each other's eyes. No low partitions allowing you, with a dreary absence of contrast and mystery, to see everything at all moments; but tall dark panels, under whose shadow I sank with a sense of retirement through the

Litany, only to feel with more intensity my burst into the conspicuousness of public life when I was made to stand up on the seat during the psalms or the singing.

And the singing was no mechanical affair of official routine; it had a drama. As the moment of psalmody approached, by some process to me as mysterious and untraceable as the opening of the flowers or the breaking-out of the stars, a slate appeared in front of the gallery, advertising in bold characters the psalm about to be sung, lest the sonorous announcement of the clerk should still leave the bucolic mind in doubt on that head. Then followed the migration of the clerk to the gallery, where, in company with a bassoon, two key-bugles, a carpenter understood to have an amazing power of singing "counter," and two lesser musical stars, he formed the complement of a choir regarded in Shepperton as one of distinguished attraction, occasionally known to draw hearers from the next parish. The innovation of hymn-books was as yet undreamed of; even the New Version was regarded with a sort of melancholy tolerance, as part of the common degeneracy in a time when prices had dwindled, and a cotton gown was no longer stout enough to last a lifetime; for the lyrical taste of the best heads in Shepperton had been formed on Sternhold and Hopkins. But the greatest triumphs of the Shepperton choir were reserved for the Sundays when the slate announced an *Anthem*, with a dignified abstinence from particularization, both words and music lying far beyond the reach of the most ambitious amateur in the congregation: — an anthem in which the key-bugles always ran away at a great pace, while the bassoon every now and then boomed a flying shot after them.

As for the clergyman, Mr. Gilfil, an excellent old gentleman, who smoked very long pipes and preached very short sermons, I must not speak of him, or I might be tempted to tell the story of his life, which had its little romance, as most lives have between the ages of teetotum and tobacco. And at present I am concerned with quite another sort of clergyman — the Rev. Amos Barton, who did not come to Shepperton until long after Mr. Gilfil had departed this life — until after

an interval in which Evangelicalism and the Catholic Question had begun to agitate the rustic mind with controversial debates. A Popish blacksmith had produced a strong Protestant reaction by declaring that, as soon as the Emancipation Bill was passed, he should do a great stroke of business in gridirons; and the disinclination of the Shepperton parishioners generally to dim the unique glory of St. Lawrence, rendered the Church and Constitution an affair of their business and bosoms. A zealous Evangelical preacher had made the old sounding-board vibrate with quite a different sort of elocution from Mr. Gilfil's; the hymn-book had almost superseded the Old and New Versions; and the great square pews were crowded with new faces from distant corners of the parish — perhaps from Dissenting chapels.

You are not imagining, I hope, that Amos Barton was the incumbent of Shepperton. He was no such thing. Those were days when a man could hold three small livings, starve a curate apiece on two of them, and live badly himself on the third. It was so with the Vicar of Shepperton; a vicar given to bricks and mortar, and thereby running into debt far away in a northern county — who executed his vicarial functions towards Shepperton by pocketing the sum of thirty-five pounds ten per annum, the net surplus remaining to him from the proceeds of that living, after the disbursement of eighty pounds as the annual stipend of his curate. And now, pray, can you solve me the following problem? Given a man with a wife and six children: let him be obliged always to exhibit himself when outside his own door in a suit of black broadcloth, such as will not undermine the foundations of the Establishment by a paltry plebeian glossiness or an unseemly whiteness at the edges; in a snowy cravat, which is a serious investment of labor in the hemming, starching, and ironing departments; and in a hat which shows no symptom of taking to the hideous doctrine of expediency, and shaping itself according to circumstances; let him have a parish large enough to create an external necessity for abundant shoeleather, and an internal necessity for abundant beef and mutton, as well as poor enough to require frequent priestly

consolation in the shape of shillings and sixpences; and, lastly, let him be compelled, by his own pride and other people's, to dress his wife and children with gentility from bonnet-strings to shoe-strings. By what process of division can the sum of eighty pounds per annum be made to yield a quotient which will cover that man's weekly expenses? This was the problem presented by the position of the Rev. Amos Barton, as curate of Shepperton, rather more than twenty years ago.

What was thought of this problem, and of the man who had to work it out, by some of the well-to-do inhabitants of Shepperton, two years or more after Mr. Barton's arrival among them, you shall hear, if you will accompany me to Cross Farm, and to the fireside of Mrs. Patten, a childless old lady, who had got rich chiefly by the negative process of spending nothing. Mrs. Patten's passive accumulation of wealth, through all sorts of "bad times," on the farm of which she had been sole tenant since her husband's death, her epigrammatic neighbor, Mrs. Hackit, sarcastically accounted for by supposing that "sixpences grew on the bents of Cross Farm;" while Mr. Hackit, expressing his views more literally, reminded his wife that "money breeds money." Mr. and Mrs. Hackit, from the neighboring farm, are Mrs. Patten's guests this evening; so is Mr. Pilgrim, the doctor from the nearest market-town, who, though occasionally affecting aristocratic airs, and giving late dinners with enigmatic side-dishes and poisonous port, is never so comfortable as when he is relaxing his professional legs in one of those excellent farm-houses where the mice are sleek and the mistress sickly. And he is at this moment in clover.

For the flickering of Mrs. Patten's bright fire is reflected in her bright copper tea-kettle, the home-made muffins glisten with an inviting succulence, and Mrs. Patten's niece, a single lady of fifty, who has refused the most ineligible offers out of devotion to her aged aunt, is pouring the rich cream into the fragrant tea with a discreet liberality.

Reader! *did* you ever taste such a cup of tea as Miss Gibbs is this moment handing to Mr. Pilgrim? Do you know the dulcet strength, the animating blandness of tea sufficiently

blended with real farm-house cream? No — most likely you are a miserable town-bred reader, who think of cream as a thinnish white fluid, delivered in infinitesimal pennyworths down area steps; or perhaps, from a presentiment of calves' brains, you refrain from any lacteal addition, and rasp your tongue with unmitigated bohea. You have a vague idea of a milch cow as probably a white plaster animal standing in a butterman's window, and you know nothing of the sweet history of genuine cream, such as Miss Gibbs's: how it was this morning in the udders of the large sleek beasts, as they stood lowing a patient entreaty under the milking-shed; how it fell with a pleasant rhythm into Betty's pail, sending a delicious incense into the cool air; how it was carried into that temple of moist cleanliness, the dairy, where it quietly separated itself from the meaner elements of milk, and lay in mellowed whiteness, ready for the skimming-dish which transferred it to Miss Gibbs's glass cream-jug. If I am right in my conjecture, you are unacquainted with the highest possibilities of tea; and Mr. Pilgrim, who is holding that cup in his hand, has an idea beyond you.

Mrs. Hackit declines cream; she has so long abstained from it with an eye to the weekly butter-money, that abstinence, wedded to habit, has begotten aversion. She is a thin woman with a chronic liver-complaint, which would have secured her Mr. Pilgrim's entire regard and unreserved good word, even if he had not been in awe of her tongue, which was as sharp as his own lancet. She has brought her knitting — no frivolous fancy knitting, but a substantial woollen stocking; the click-click of her knitting-needles is the running accompaniment to all her conversation, and in her utmost enjoyment of spoiling a friend's self-satisfaction, she was never known to spoil a stocking.

Mrs. Patten does not admire this excessive click-clicking activity. Quiescence in an easy-chair, under the sense of compound interest perpetually accumulating, has long seemed an ample function to her, and she does her malevolence gently. She is a pretty little old woman of eighty, with a close cap and tiny flat white curls round her face, as natty and unsoiled

and invariable as the waxen image of a little old lady under a glass-case; once a lady's-maid, and married for her beauty. She used to adore her husband, and now she adores her money, cherishing a quiet blood-relation's hatred for her niece, Janet Gibbs, who, she knows, expects a large legacy, and whom she is determined to disappoint. Her money shall all go in a lump to a distant relation of her husband's, and Janet shall be saved the trouble of pretending to cry, by finding that she is left with a miserable pittance.

Mrs. Patten has more respect for her neighbor Mr. Hackit than for most people. Mr. Hackit is a shrewd substantial man, whose advice about crops is always worth listening to, and who is too well off to want to borrow money.

And now that we are snug and warm with this little tea-party, while it is freezing with February bitterness outside, we will listen to what they are talking about.

"So," said Mr. Pilgrim, with his mouth only half empty of muffin, "you had a row in Shepperton Church last Sunday. I was at Jem Hood's, the bassoon-man's, this morning, attending his wife, and he swears he'll be revenged on the parson — a confounded, methodistical, meddlesome chap, who must be putting his finger in every pie. What was it all about?"

"Oh, a passill o' nonsense," said Mr. Hackit, sticking one thumb between the buttons of his capacious waistcoat, and retaining a pinch of snuff with the other — for he was but moderately given to "the cups that cheer but not inebriate," and had already finished his tea; "they began to sing the wedding psalm for a new-married couple, as pretty a psalm an' as pretty a tune as any in the prayer-book. It's been sung for every new-married couple since I was a boy. And what can be better?" Here Mr. Hackit stretched out his left arm, threw back his head, and broke into melody —

"'Oh what a happy thing it is
And joyful for to see,
Brethren to dwell together in
Friendship and unity'

But Mr. Barton is all for the hymns, and a sort o' music as I can't join in at all."

"And so," said Mr. Pilgrim, recalling Mr. Hackit from lyrical reminiscences to narrative, "he called out Silence! did he? when he got into the pulpit; and gave a hymn out himself to some meeting-house tune?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Hackit stooping towards the candle to pick up a stitch, "and turned as red as a turkey-cock. I often say, when he preaches about meekness, he gives himself a slap in the face. He 's like me — he 's got a temper of his own."

"Rather a low-bred fellow, I think, Barton," said Mr. Pilgrim, who hated the Rev. Amos for two reasons — because he had called in a new doctor, recently settled in Shepperton; and because, being himself a dabbler in drugs, he had the credit of having cured a patient of Mr. Pilgrim's. "They say his father was a Dissenting shoemaker; and he 's half a Dissenter himself. Why, does n't he preach extempore in that cottage up here, of a Sunday evening?"

"Tchuh!" — this was Mr. Hackit's favorite interjection — "that preaching without book 's no good, only when a man has a gift, and has the Bible at his fingers' ends. It was all very well for Parry — he 'd a gift; and in my youth I 've heard the Ranters out o' doors in Yorkshire go on for an hour or two on end, without ever sticking fast a minute. There was one clever chap, I remember, as used to say, 'You 're like the wood-pigeon; it says do, do, do all day, and never sets about any work itself.' That 's bringing it home to people. But our parson 's no gift at all that way; he can preach as good a sermon as need be heard when he writes it down. But when he tries to preach wi'out book, he rambles about, and does n't stick to his text; and every now and then he flounders about like a sheep as has cast itself, and can't get on its legs again. You would n't like that, Mrs. Patten, if you was to go to church now?"

"Eh, dear," said Mrs. Patten, falling back in her chair, and lifting up her little withered hands, "what 'ud Mr. Gilfil say, if he was worthy to know the changes as have come about i' the church these last ten years? I don't understand these new sort o' doctrines. When Mr. Barton comes to see me, he talks about nothing but my sins and my need o' marcy. Now,

Mr. Hackit, I've never been a sinner. From the fust beginning, when I went into service, I al'ys did my duty by my emplyers. I was a good wife as any in the county — never aggravated my husband. The cheese-factor used to say my cheese was al'ys to be depended on. I've known women, as their cheeses swelled a shame to be seen, when their husbands had counted on the cheese-money to make up their rent; and yet they'd three gowns to my one. If I'm not to be saved, I know a many as are in a bad way. But it's well for me as I can't go to church any longer, for if th' old singers are to be done away with, there'll be nothing left as it was in Mr. Patten's time; and what's more, I hear you've settled to pull the church down and build it up new?"

Now the fact was that the Rev. Amos Barton, on his last visit to Mrs. Patten, had urged her to enlarge her promised subscription of twenty pounds, representing to her that she was only a steward of her riches, and that she could not spend them more for the glory of God than by giving a heavy subscription towards the rebuilding of Shepperton Church — a practical precept which was not likely to smooth the way to her acceptance of his theological doctrine. Mr. Hackit, who had more doctrinal enlightenment than Mrs. Patten, had been a little shocked by the heathenism of her speech, and was glad of the new turn given to the subject by this question, addressed to him as church-warden and an authority in all parochial matters.

"Ah," he answered, "the parson's bothered us into it at last, and we're to begin pulling down this spring. But we haven't got money enough yet. I was for waiting till we'd made up the sum, and, for my part, I think the congregation's fell off o' late; though Mr. Barton says that's because there's been no room for the people when they've come. You see, the congregation got so large in Parry's time, the people stood in the aisles; but there's never any crowd now, as I can see."

"Well," said Mrs. Hackit, whose good-nature began to act now that it was a little in contradiction with the dominant tone of the conversation, "*I* like Mr. Barton. I think he's a good sort o' man, for all he's not overburthen'd i' th' upper

storey; and his wife's as nice a lady-like woman as I'd wish to see. How nice she keeps her children! and little enough money to do't with; and a delicate creatur' — six children, and another a-coming. I don't know how they make both ends meet, I'm sure, now her aunt has left 'em. But I sent 'em a cheese and a sack o' potatoes last week; that's something towards filling the little mouths."

"Ah!" said Mr. Hackit, "and my wife makes Mr. Barton a good stiff glass o' brandy-and-water, when he comes in to supper after his cottage preaching. The parson likes it; it puts a bit o' color into his face, and makes him look a deal handsomer."

This allusion to brandy-and-water suggested to Miss Gibbs the introduction of the liquor decanters, now that the tea was cleared away; for in bucolic society five-and-twenty years ago, the human animal of the male sex was understood to be perpetually athirst, and "something to drink" was as necessary a "condition of thought" as Time and Space.

"Now, that cottage preaching," said Mr. Pilgrim, mixing himself a strong glass of "cold without," "I was talking about it to our Parson Ely the other day, and he does n't approve of it at all. He said it did as much harm as good to give a too familiar aspect to religious teaching. That was what Ely said — it does as much harm as good to give a too familiar aspect to religious teaching."

Mr. Pilgrim generally spoke with an intermittent kind of splutter; indeed, one of his patients had observed that it was a pity such a clever man had a "'pediment" in his speech. But when he came to what he conceived the pith of his argument or the point of his joke, he mouthed out his words with slow emphasis; as a hen, when advertising her accouchement, passes at irregular intervals from pianissimo semiquavers to fortissimo crotchets. He thought this speech of Mr. Ely's particularly metaphysical and profound, and the more decisive of the question because it was a generality which represented no particulars to his mind.

"Well, I don't know about that," said Mrs. Hackit, who had always the courage of her opinion, "but I know, some of our

laborers and stockingers as used never to come to church, come to the cottage, and that 's better than never hearing anything good from week's end to week's end. And there 's that Track Society as Mr. Barton has begun — I 've seen more o' the poor people with going tracking, than all the time I 've lived in the parish before. And there 'd need be something done among 'em; for the drinking at them Benefit Clubs is shameful. There 's hardly a steady man or steady woman either, but what 's a Dissenter."

During this speech of Mrs. Hackit's, Mr. Pilgrim had emitted a succession of little snorts, something like the treble grunts of a guinea-pig, which were always with him the sign of suppressed disapproval. But he never contradicted Mrs. Hackit — a woman whose "pot-luck" was always to be relied on, and who on her side had unlimited reliance on bleeding, blistering, and draughts.

Mrs. Patten, however, felt equal disapprobation, and had no reasons for suppressing it.

"Well," she remarked, "I 've heared of no good from interfering with one 's neighbors, poor or rich. And I hate the sight o' women going about trapesing from house to house in all weathers, wet or dry, and coming in with their petticoats dagged and their shoes all over mud. Janet wanted to join in the tracking, but I told her I 'd have nobody tracking out o' my house; when I 'm gone, she may do as she likes. I never dagged my petticoats in *my* life, and I 've no opinion o' that sort o' religion."

"No," said Mr. Hackit, who was fond of soothing the acerbities of the feminine mind with a jocose compliment, "you held your petticoats so high, to show your tight ankles: it is n't everybody as likes to show her ankles."

This joke met with general acceptance, even from the snubbed Janet, whose ankles were only tight in the sense of looking extremely squeezed by her boots. But Janet seemed always to identify herself with her aunt's personality, holding her own under protest.

Under cover of the general laughter the gentlemen replenished their glasses, Mr. Pilgrim attempting to give his the

character of a stirrup-cup by observing that he "must be going." Miss Gibbs seized this opportunity of telling Mrs. Hackit that she suspected Betty, the dairymaid, of frying the best bacon for the shepherd, when he sat up with her to "help brew;" whereupon Mrs. Hackit replied that she had always thought Betty false; and Mrs. Patten said there was no bacon stolen when *she* was able to manage. Mr. Hackit, who often complained that he "never saw the like to women with their maids — he never had any trouble with his men," avoided listening to this discussion, by raising the question of vetches with Mr. Pilgrim. The stream of conversation had thus diverged; and no more was said about the Rev. Amos Barton, who is the main object of interest to us just now. So we may leave Cross Farm without waiting till Mrs. Hackit, resolutely donning her clogs and wrappings, renders it incumbent on Mr. Pilgrim also to fulfil his frequent threat of going.

CHAPTER II.

It was happy for the Rev. Amos Barton that he did not, like us, overhear the conversation recorded in the last chapter. Indeed, what mortal is there of us, who would find his satisfaction enhanced by an opportunity of comparing the picture he presents to himself of his own doings, with the picture they make on the mental retina of his neighbors? We are poor plants buoyed up by the air-vessels of our own conceit: alas for us, if we get a few pinches that empty us of that windy self-subsistence! The very capacity for good would go out of us. For, tell the most impassioned orator, suddenly, that his wig is awry, or his shirt-lap hanging out, and that he is tickling people by the oddity of his person, instead of thrilling them by the energy of his periods, and you would infallibly dry up the spring of his eloquence. That is a deep and wide

saying, that no miracle can be wrought without faith — without the worker's faith in himself, as well as the recipient's faith in him. And the greater part of the worker's faith in himself is made up of the faith that others believe in him.

Let me be persuaded that my neighbor Jenkins considers me a blockhead, and I shall never shine in conversation with him any more. Let me discover that the lovely Phœbe thinks my squint intolerable, and I shall never be able to fix her blandly with my disengaged eye again.

Thank heaven, then, that a little illusion is left to us, to enable us to be useful and agreeable — that we don't know exactly what our friends think of us — that the world is not made of looking-glass, to show us just the figure we are making, and just what is going on behind our backs? By the help of dear friendly illusion, we are able to dream that we are charming — and our faces wear a becoming air of self-possession; we are able to dream that other men admire our talents — and our benignity is undisturbed; we are able to dream that we are doing much good — and we do a little.

Thus it was with Amos Barton on that very Thursday evening, when he was the subject of the conversation at Cross Farm. He had been dining at Mr. Farquhar's, the secondary squire of the parish, and, stimulated by unwonted gravies and port-wine, had been delivering his opinion on affairs parochial and extra-parochial with considerable animation. And he was now returning home in the moonlight — a little chill, it is true, for he had just now no great-coat compatible with clerical dignity, and a fur boa round one's neck, with a waterproof cape over one's shoulders, does n't frighten away the cold from one's legs; but entirely unsuspicious, not only of Mr. Hackit's estimate of his oratorical powers, but also of the critical remarks passed on him by the Misses Farquhar as soon as the drawing-room door had closed behind him. Miss Julia had observed that she *never* heard any one sniff so frightfully as Mr. Barton did — she had a great mind to offer him her pocket-handkerchief; and Miss Arabella wondered why he always said he was going *for* to do a thing. He, excellent man! was meditating fresh pastoral exertions on the morrow; he would set

on foot his lending library; in which he had introduced some books that would be a pretty sharp blow to the Dissenters — one especially, purporting to be written by a working man, who, out of pure zeal for the welfare of his class, took the trouble to warn them in this way against those hypocritical thieves, the Dissenting preachers. The Rev. Amos Barton profoundly believed in the existence of that working man, and had thoughts of writing to him. Dissent, he considered, would have its head bruised in Shepperton, for did he not attack it in two ways? He preached Low-Church doctrine — as evangelical as anything to be heard in the Independent Chapel; and he made a High-Church assertion of ecclesiastical powers and functions. Clearly, the Dissenters would feel that "the parson" was too many for them. Nothing like a man who combines shrewdness with energy. The wisdom of the serpent, Mr. Barton considered, was one of his strong points.

Look at him as he winds through the little churchyard! The silver light that falls aslant on church and tomb, enables you to see his slim black figure, made all the slimmer by tight pantaloons, as it flits past the pale gravestones. He walks with a quick step, and is now rapping with sharp decision at the vicarage door. It is opened without delay by the nurse, cook, and housemaid, all at once — that is to say, by the robust maid-of-all-work, Nanny; and as Mr. Barton hangs up his hat in the passage, you see that a narrow face of no particular complexion — even the small-pox that has attacked it seems to have been of a mongrel, indefinite kind — with features of no particular shape, and an eye of no particular expression, is surmounted by a slope of baldness gently rising from brow to crown. You judge him, rightly, to be about forty. The house is quiet, for it is half-past ten, and the children have long been gone to bed. He opens the sitting-room door, but instead of seeing his wife, as he expected, stitching with the nimblest of fingers by the light of one candle, he finds her dispensing with the light of a candle altogether. She is softly pacing up and down by the red firelight, holding in her arms little Walter, the year-old baby, who looks over her shoulder with large wide-open eyes, while the patient mother pats his

back with her soft hand, and glances with a sigh at the heap of large and small stockings lying unmended on the table.

She was a lovely woman — Mrs. Amos Barton; a large, fair, gentle Madonna, with thick, close, chestnut curls beside her well-rounded cheeks, and with large, tender, short-sighted eyes. The flowing lines of her tall figure made the limpest dress look graceful, and her old frayed black silk seemed to repose on her bust and limbs with a placid elegance and sense of distinction, in strong contrast with the uneasy sense of being no fit, that seemed to express itself in the rustling of Mrs. Farquhar's *gros de Naples*. The caps she wore would have been pronounced, when off her head, utterly heavy and hideous — for in those days even fashionable caps were large and floppy; but surmounting her long arched neck, and mingling their borders of cheap lace and ribbon with her chestnut curls, they seemed miracles of successful millinery. Among strangers she was shy and tremulous as a girl of fifteen; she blushed crimson if any one appealed to her opinion; yet that tall, graceful, substantial presence was so imposing in its mildness, that men spoke to her with an agreeable sensation of timidity.

Soothing, unspeakable charm of gentle womanhood! which supersedes all acquisitions, all accomplishments. You would never have asked, at any period of Mrs. Amos Barton's life, if she sketched or played the piano. You would even perhaps have been rather scandalized if she had descended from the serene dignity of *being* to the assiduous unrest of *doing*. Happy the man, you would have thought, whose eye will rest on her in the pauses of his fireside reading — whose hot aching forehead will be soothed by the contact of her cool soft hand — who will recover himself from dejection at his mistakes and failures in the loving light of her unreproaching eyes! You would not, perhaps, have anticipated that this bliss would fall to the share of precisely such a man as Amos Barton, whom you have already surmised not to have the refined sensibilities for which you might have imagined Mrs. Barton's qualities to be destined by pre-established harmony. But I, for one, do not grudge Amos Barton this sweet wife. I have all my life had a sympathy for mongrel ungainly dogs,

who are nobody's pets; and I would rather surprise one of them by a pat and a pleasant morsel, than meet the condescending advances of the loveliest Skye-terrier who has his cushion by my lady's chair. That, to be sure, is not the way of the world: if it happens to see a fellow of fine proportions and aristocratic mien, who makes no *faux pas*, and wins golden opinions from all sorts of men, it straightway picks out for him the loveliest of unmarried women, and says, *There* would be a proper match! Not at all, say I: let that successful, well-shapen, discreet, and able gentleman put up with something less than the best in the matrimonial department; and let the sweet woman go to make sunshine and a soft pillow for the poor devil whose legs are not models, whose efforts are often blunders, and who in general gets more kicks than halfpence. She—the sweet woman—will like it as well; for her sublime capacity of loving will have all the more scope; and I venture to say, Mrs. Barton's nature would never have grown half so angelic if she had married the man you would perhaps have had in your eye for her—a man with sufficient income and abundant personal *éclat*. Besides, Amos was an affectionate husband, and, in his way, valued his wife as his best treasure.

But now he has shut the door behind him, and said, "Well, Milly!"

"Well, dear!" was the corresponding greeting, made eloquent by a smile.

"So that young rascal won't go to sleep! Can't you give him to Nanny?"

"Why, Nanny has been busy ironing this evening; but I think I'll take him to her now." And Mrs. Barton glided towards the kitchen, while her husband ran up-stairs to put on his maise-colored dressing-gown, in which costume he was quietly filling his long pipe when his wife returned to the sitting-room. Maize is a color that decidedly did *not* suit his complexion, and it is one that soon soils; why, then, did Mr. Barton select it for domestic wear? Perhaps because he had a knack of hitting on the wrong thing in garb as well as in grammar.

Mrs. Barton now lighted her candle, and seated herself before her heap of stockings. She had something disagreeable to tell her husband, but she would not enter on it at once.

"Have you had a nice evening, dear?"

"Yes, pretty well. Ely was there to dinner, but went away rather early. Miss Arabella is setting her cap at him with a vengeance. But I don't think he's much smitten. I've a notion Ely's engaged to some one at a distance, and will astonish all the ladies who are languishing for him here, by bringing home his bride one of these days. Ely's a sly dog; he'll like that."

"Did the Farquhars say anything about the singing last Sunday?"

"Yes; Farquhar said he thought it was time there was some improvement in the choir. But he was rather scandalized at my setting the tune of 'Lydia.' He says he's always hearing it as he passes the Independent meeting." Here Mr. Barton laughed — he had a way of laughing at criticisms that other people thought damaging — and thereby showed the remainder of a set of teeth which, like the remnants of the Old Guard, were few in number, and very much the worse for wear. "But," he continued, "Mrs. Farquhar talked the most about Mr. Bridmain and the Countess. She has taken up all the gossip about them, and wanted to convert me to her opinion, but I told her pretty strongly what I thought."

"Dear me! why will people take so much pains to find out evil about others? I have had a note from the Countess since you went, asking us to dine with them on Friday."

Here Mrs. Barton reached the note from the mantel-piece, and gave it to her husband. We will look over his shoulder while he reads it: —

SWEETEST MILLY, — Bring your lovely face with your husband to dine with us on Friday at seven — do If not, I will be sulky with you till Sunday, when I shall be obliged to see you, and shall long to kiss you that very moment. Yours, according to your answer,

CAROLINE CZERLASKI.

"Just like her, is n't it?" said Mrs. Barton. "I suppose we can go?"

"Yes; I have no engagement. The Clerical Meeting is to-morrow, you know."

"And, dear, Woods the butcher called, to say he must have some money next week. He has a payment to make up."

This announcement made Mr. Barton thoughtful. He puffed more rapidly, and looked at the fire.

"I think I must ask Hackit to lend me twenty pounds, for it is nearly two months till Lady-day, and we can't give Woods our last shilling."

"I hardly like you to ask Mr. Hackit, dear — he and Mrs. Hackit have been so very kind to us; they have sent us so many things lately."

"Then I must ask Oldinport. I'm going to write to him to-morrow morning, for to tell him the arrangement I've been thinking of about having service in the workhouse while the church is being enlarged. If he agrees to attend service there once or twice, the other people will come. Net the large fish, and you're sure to have the small fry."

"I wish we could do without borrowing money, and yet I don't see how we can. Poor Fred must have some new shoes; I couldn't let him go to Mrs. Bond's yesterday because his toes were peeping out, dear child! and I can't let him walk anywhere except in the garden. He must have a pair before Sunday. Really, boots and shoes are the greatest trouble of my life. Everything else one can turn and turn about, and make old look like new; but there's no coaxing boots and shoes to look better than they are."

Mrs. Barton was playfully undervaluing her skill in metamorphosing boots and shoes. She had at that moment on her feet a pair of slippers which had long ago lived through the prunella phase of their existence, and were now running a respectable career as black silk slippers, having been neatly covered with that material by Mrs. Barton's own neat fingers. Wonderful fingers those! they were never empty; for if she went to spend a few hours with a friendly parishioner, out came her thimble and a piece of calico or muslin, which, before she left, had become a mysterious little garment with all sorts of hemmed ins and outs. She was even trying to persuade

her husband to leave off tight pantaloons, because if he would wear the ordinary gun-cases, she knew she could make them so well that no one would suspect the sex of the tailor.

But by this time Mr. Barton has finished his pipe, the candle begins to burn low, and Mrs. Barton goes to see if Nanny has succeeded in lulling Walter to sleep. Nanny is that moment putting him in the little cot by his mother's bedside; the head, with its thin wavelets of brown hair, indents the little pillow; and a tiny, waxen, dimpled fist hides the rosy lips, for baby is given to the infantine peccadillo of thumb-sucking.

So Nanny could now join in the short evening prayer, and all could go to bed.

Mrs. Barton carried up-stairs the remainder of her heap of stockings, and laid them on a table close to her bedside, where also she placed a warm shawl, removing her candle, before she put it out, to a tin socket fixed at the head of her bed. Her body was very weary, but her heart was not heavy, in spite of Mr. Woods the butcher, and the transitory nature of shoe-leather; for her heart so overflowed with love, she felt sure she was near a fountain of love that would care for husband and babes better than she could foresee; so she was soon asleep. But about half-past five o'clock in the morning, if there were any angels watching round her bed — and angels might be glad of such an office — they saw Mrs. Barton rise up quietly, careful not to disturb the slumbering Amos, who was snoring the snore of the just, light her candle, prop herself upright with the pillows, throw the warm shawl round her shoulders, and renew her attack on the heap of undarned stockings. She darned away until she heard Nanny stirring, and then drowsiness came with the dawn; the candle was put out, and she sank into a doze. But at nine o'clock she was at the breakfast-table, busy cutting bread-and-butter for five hungry mouths, while Nanny, baby on one arm, in rosy cheeks, fat neck, and night-gown, brought in a jug of hot milk-and-water. Nearest her mother sits the nine-year-old Patty, the eldest child, whose sweet fair face is already rather grave sometimes, and who always wants to run up-stairs to save

mamma's legs, which get so tired of an evening. Then there are four other blond heads — two boys and two girls, gradually decreasing in size down to Chubby, who is making a round O of her mouth to receive a bit of papa's "baton." Papa's attention was divided between petting Chubby, rebuking the noisy Fred, which he did with a somewhat excessive sharpness, and eating his own breakfast. He had not yet looked at mamma, and did not know that her cheek was paler than usual. But Patty whispered, "Mamma, have you the headache?"

Happily coal was cheap in the neighborhood of Shepperton, and Mr. Hackit would at any time let his horses draw a load for "the parson" without charge; so there was a blazing fire in the sitting-room, and not without need, for the vicarage garden, as they looked out on it from the bow-window, was hard with black frost, and the sky had the white woolly look that portends snow.

Breakfast over, Mr. Barton mounted to his study, and occupied himself in the first place with his letter to Mr. Oldinport. It was very much the same sort of letter as most clergymen would have written under the same circumstances, except that instead of *per*ambulate, the Rev. Amos wrote *pre*ambulate, and instead of "if haply," "if happily," the contingency indicated being the reverse of happy. Mr. Barton had not the gift of perfect accuracy in English orthography and syntax, which was unfortunate, as he was known not to be a Hebrew scholar, and not in the least suspected of being an accomplished Grecian. These lapses, in a man who had gone through the Eleusinian mysteries of a university education, surprised the young ladies of his parish extremely; especially the Misses Farquhar, whom he had once addressed in a letter as Dear Mads., apparently an abbreviation for Madams. The persons least surprised at the Rev. Amos's deficiencies were his clerical brethren, who had gone through the mysteries themselves.

At eleven o'clock, Mr. Barton walked forth in cape and boa, with the sleet driving in his face, to read prayers at the workhouse, euphuistically called the "College." The College was a huge square stone building, standing on the best apology for

an elevation of ground that could be seen for about ten miles round Shepperton. A flat ugly district this; depressing enough to look at even on the brightest days. The roads are black with coal-dust, the brick houses dingy with smoke; and at that time — the time of handloom weavers — every other cottage had a loom at its window, where you might see a pale, sickly-looking man or woman pressing a narrow chest against a board, and doing a sort of tread-mill work with legs and arms. A troublesome district for a clergyman; at least to one who, like Amos Barton, understood the "cure of souls" in something more than an official sense; for over and above the rustic stupidity furnished by the farm-laborers, the miners brought obstreperous animalism, and the weavers an acrid Radicalism and Dissent. Indeed, Mrs. Hackit often observed that the colliers, who many of them earned better wages than Mr. Barton, "passed their time in doing nothing but swilling ale and smoking, like the beasts that perish" (speaking, we may presume, in a remotely analogical sense); and in some of the ale-house corners the drink was flavored by a dingy kind of infidelity, something like rinsings of Tom Paine in ditch-water. A certain amount of religious excitement created by the popular preaching of Mr. Parry, Amos's predecessor, had nearly died out, and the religious life of Shepperton was falling back towards low-water mark. Here, you perceive, was a terrible stronghold of Satan; and you may well pity the Rev. Amos Barton, who had to stand single-handed and summon it to surrender. We read, indeed, that the walls of Jericho fell down before the sound of trumpets; but we nowhere hear that those trumpets were hoarse and feeble. Doubtless they were trumpets that gave forth clear ringing tones, and sent a mighty vibration through brick and mortar. But the oratory of the Rev. Amos resembled rather a Belgian railway-horn which shows praiseworthy intentions inadequately fulfilled. He often missed the right note both in public and private exhortation, and got a little angry in consequence. For though Amos thought himself strong, he did not *feel* himself strong. Nature had given him the opinion, but not the sensation. Without that opinion he would probably never have worn cambric

bands, but would have been an excellent cabinet-maker and deacon of an Independent church, as his father was before him (he was not a shoemaker, as Mr. Pilgrim had reported). He might then have sniffed long and loud in the corner of his pew in Gun Street Chapel; he might have indulged in halting rhetoric at prayer-meetings, and have spoken faulty English in private life; and these little infirmities would not have prevented him, honest faithful man that he was, from being a shining light in the Dissenting circle of Bridgeport. A tallow dip, of the long-eight description, is an excellent thing in the kitchen candlestick, and Betty's nose and eye are not sensitive to the difference between it and the finest wax; it is only when you stick it in the silver candlestick, and introduce it into the drawing-room, that it seems plebeian, dim, and ineffectual. Alas for the worthy man who, like that candle, gets himself into the wrong place! It is only the very largest souls who will be able to appreciate and pity him — who will discern and love sincerity of purpose amid all the bungling feebleness of achievement.

But now Amos Barton has made his way through the sleet as far as the College, has thrown off his hat, cape, and boa, and is reading, in the dreary stone-floored dining-room, a portion of the morning service to the inmates seated on the benches before him. Remember, the New Poor-law had not yet come into operation, and Mr. Barton was not acting as paid chaplain of the Union, but as the pastor who had the cure of all souls in his parish, pauper as well as other. After the prayers he always addressed to them a short discourse on some subject suggested by the lesson for the day, striving if by this means some edifying matter might find its way into the pauper mind and conscience — perhaps a task as trying as you could well imagine to the faith and patience of any honest clergyman. For, on the very first bench, these were the faces on which his eye had to rest, watching whether there was any stirring under the stagnant surface.

Right in front of him — probably because he was stone-deaf, and it was deemed more edifying to hear nothing at a short distance than at a long one — sat "Old Maxum," as he was

familiarly called, his real patronymic remaining a mystery to most persons. A fine philological sense discerns in this cognomen an indication that the pauper patriarch had once been considered pithy and sententious in his speech; but now the weight of ninety-five years lay heavy on his tongue as well as on his ears, and he sat before the clergyman with protruded chin, and munching mouth, and eyes that seemed to look at emptiness.

Next to him sat Poll Fodge — known to the magistracy of her county as Mary Higgins — a one-eyed woman, with a scarred and seamy face, the most notorious rebel in the workhouse, said to have once thrown her broth over the master's coat-tails, and who, in spite of nature's apparent safeguards against that contingency, had contributed to the perpetuation of the Fodge characteristics in the person of a small boy, who was behaving naughtily on one of the back benches. Miss Fodge fixed her one sore eye on Mr. Barton with a sort of hardy defiance.

Beyond this member of the softer sex, at the end of the bench, sat "Silly Jim," a young man afflicted with hydrocephalus, who rolled his head from side to side, and gazed at the point of his nose. These were the supporters of Old Maxum on his right.

On his left sat Mr. Fitchett, a tall fellow, who had once been a footman in the Oldinport family, and in that giddy elevation had enunciated a contemptuous opinion of boiled beef, which had been traditionally handed down in Shepperton as the direct cause of his ultimate reduction to pauper commons. His calves were now shrunken, and his hair was gray without the aid of powder; but he still carried his chin as if he were conscious of a stiff cravat; he set his dilapidated hat on with a knowing inclination towards the left ear; and when he was on field-work, he carted and uncarted the manure with a sort of flunky grace, the ghost of that jaunty demeanor with which he used to usher in my lady's morning visitors. The flunky nature was nowhere completely subdued but in his stomach, and he still divided society into gentry, gentry's flunkies, and the people who provided for them. A clergyman without a

flunky was an anomaly, belonging to neither of these classes. Mr. Fitchett had an irrepressible tendency to drowsiness under spiritual instruction, and in the recurrent regularity with which he dozed off until he nodded and awaked himself, he looked not unlike a piece of mechanism, ingeniously contrived for measuring the length of Mr. Barton's discourse.

Perfectly wide-awake, on the contrary, was his left-hand neighbor, Mrs. Brick, one of those hard undying old women, to whom age seems to have given a network of wrinkles, as a coat of magic armor against the attacks of winters, warm or cold. The point on which Mrs. Brick was still sensitive — the theme on which you might possibly excite her hope and fear — was snuff. It seemed to be an embalming powder, helping her soul to do the office of salt.

And now, eke out an audience of which this front benchful was a sample, with a certain number of refractory children, over whom Mr. Spratt, the master of the workhouse, exercised an irate surveillance, and I think you will admit that the university-taught clergyman, whose office it is to bring home the gospel to a handful of such souls, has a sufficiently hard task. For, to have any chance of success, short of miraculous intervention, he must bring his geographical, chronological, exegetical mind pretty nearly to the pauper point of view, or of no view; he must have some approximate conception of the mode in which the doctrines that have so much vitality in the plenum of his own brain will comport themselves *in vacuo* — that is to say, in a brain that is neither geographical, chronological, nor exegetical. It is a flexible imagination that can take such a leap as that, and an adroit tongue that can adapt its speech to so unfamiliar a position. The Rev. Amos Barton had neither that flexible imagination, nor that adroit tongue. He talked of Israel and its sins, of chosen vessels, of the Paschal lamb, of blood as a medium of reconciliation; and he strove in this way to convey religious truth within reach of the Fodge and Fitchett mind. This very morning, the first lesson was the twelfth chapter of Exodus, and Mr. Barton's exposition turned on unleavened bread. Nothing in the world more suited to the simple understanding

than instruction through familiar types and symbols! But there is always this danger attending it, that the interest or comprehension of your hearers may stop short precisely at the point where your spiritual interpretation begins. And Mr. Barton this morning succeeded in carrying the pauper imagination to the dough-tub, but unfortunately was not able to carry it upwards from that well-known object to the unknown truths which it was intended to shadow forth.

Alas! a natural incapacity for teaching, finished by keeping "terms" at Cambridge, where there are able mathematicians, and butter is sold by the yard, is not apparently the medium through which Christian doctrine will distil as welcome dew on withered souls.

And so, while the sleet outside was turning to unquestionable snow, and the stony dining-room looked darker and drearier, and Mr. Fitchett was nodding his lowest, and Mr. Spratt was boxing the boys' ears with a constant *rinforzando*, as he felt more keenly the approach of dinner-time, Mr. Barton wound up his exhortation with something of the February chill at his heart as well as his feet. Mr. Fitchett, thoroughly roused now the instruction was at an end, obsequiously and gracefully advanced to help Mr. Barton in putting on his cape, while Mrs. Brick rubbed her withered forefinger round and round her little shoe-shaped snuff-box, vainly seeking for the fraction of a pinch. I can't help thinking that if Mr. Barton had shaken into that little box a small portion of Scotch high-dried, he might have produced something more like an amiable emotion in Mrs. Brick's mind than anything she had felt under his morning's exposition of the unleavened bread. But our good Amos labored under a deficiency of small tact as well as of small cash; and when he observed the action of the old woman's forefinger, he said, in his brusque way, "So your snuff is all gone, eh?"

Mrs. Brick's eyes twinkled with the visionary hope that the parson might be intending to replenish her box, at least mediately, through the present of a small copper.

"Ah, well! you 'll soon be going where there is no more snuff. You 'll be in need of mercy then. You must remember

that you may have to seek for mercy and not find it, just as you 're seeking for snuff."

At the first sentence of this admonition, the twinkle subsided from Mrs. Brick's eyes. The lid of her box went "click!" and her heart was shut up at the same moment.

But now Mr. Barton's attention was called for by Mr. Spratt, who was dragging a small and unwilling boy from the rear. Mr. Spratt was a small-featured, small-statured man, with a remarkable power of language, mitigated by hesitation, who piqued himself on expressing unexceptionable sentiments in unexceptionable language on all occasions.

"Mr. Barton, sir — aw — aw — excuse my trespassing on your time — aw — to beg that you will administer a rebuke to this boy; he is — aw — aw — most inveterate in ill-behavior during service-time."

The inveterate culprit was a boy of seven, vainly contending against a cold in his nose by feeble sniffing. But no sooner had Mr. Spratt uttered his impeachment, than Miss Fodge rushed forward and placed herself between Mr. Barton and the accused.

"That 's *my* child, Muster Barton," she exclaimed, further manifesting her maternal instincts by applying her apron to her offspring's nose. "He 's al'ys a-findin' faut wi' him, and a-poundin' him for nothin'. Let him goo an' eat his roost goose as is a-smellin' up in our noses while we 're a-swallering them greasy broth, an' let my boy alooan."

Mr. Spratt's small eyes flashed, and he was in danger of uttering sentiments not unexceptionable before the clergyman; but Mr. Barton, foreseeing that a prolongation of this episode would not be to edification, said "Silence!" in his severest tones.

"Let me hear no abuse. Your boy is not likely to behave well, if you set him the example of being saucy." Then stooping down to Master Fodge, and taking him by the shoulder, "Do you like being beaten?"

"No-a."

"Then what a silly boy you are to be naughty. If you were not naughty, you would n't be beaten. But if you are naughty,

God will be angry, as well as Mr. Spratt; and God can burn you forever. That will be worse than being beaten."

Master Fodge's countenance was neither affirmative nor negative of this proposition.

"But," continued Mr. Barton, "if you will be a good boy, God will love you, and you will grow up to be a good man. Now, let me hear next Thursday that you have been a good boy."

Master Fodge had no distinct vision of the benefit that would accrue to him from this change of courses. But Mr. Barton, being aware that Miss Fodge had touched on a delicate subject in alluding to the roast goose, was determined to witness no more polemics between her and Mr. Spratt, so, saying good morning to the latter, he hastily left the College.

The snow was falling in thicker and thicker flakes, and already the vicarage-garden was cloaked in white as he passed though the gate. Mrs. Barton heard him open the door, and ran out of the sitting-room to meet him.

"I 'm afraid your feet are very wet, dear. What a terrible morning! Let me take your hat. Your slippers are at the fire."

Mr. Barton was feeling a little cold and cross. It is difficult, when you have been doing disagreeable duties, without praise, on a snowy day, to attend to the very minor morals. So he showed no recognition of Milly's attentions, but simply said, "Fetch me my dressing-gown, will you?"

"It *is* down, dear. I thought you would n't go into the study, because you said you would letter and number the books for the Lending Library. Patty and I have been covering them, and they are all ready in the sitting-room."

"Oh, I can't do those this morning," said Mr. Barton, as he took off his boots and put his feet into the slippers Milly had brought him; "you must put them away into the parlor."

The sitting-room was also the day nursery and schoolroom; and while Mamma's back was turned, Dickey, the second boy, had insisted on superseding Chubby in the guidance of a headless horse, of the red-wafered species, which she was drawing round the room, so that when Papa opened the door Chubby was giving tongue energetically.

"Milly, some of these children must go away. I want to be quiet."

"Yes, dear. Hush, Chubby; go with Patty, and see what Nanny is getting for our dinner. Now, Fred and Sophy and Dickey, help me to carry these books into the parlor. There are three for Dickey. Carry them steadily."

Papa meanwhile settled himself in his easy-chair, and took up a work on Episcopacy, which he had from the Clerical Book Society; thinking he would finish it and return it this afternoon, as he was going to the Clerical Meeting at Milby Vicarage, where the Book Society had its headquarters.

The Clerical Meetings and Book Society, which had been founded some eight or ten months, had had a noticeable effect on the Rev. Amos Barton. When he first came to Shepperton he was simply an evangelical clergyman, whose Christian experiences had commenced under the teaching of the Rev. Mr. Johns, of Gun Street Chapel, and had been consolidated at Cambridge under the influence of Mr. Simeon. John Newton and Thomas Scott were his doctrinal ideals; he would have taken in the "Christian Observer" and the "Record," if he could have afforded it; his anecdotes were chiefly of the pious-jocose kind, current in Dissenting circles; and he thought an Episcopalian Establishment unobjectionable.

But by this time the effect of the Tractarian agitation was beginning to be felt in backward provincial regions, and the Tractarian satire on the Low-Church party was beginning to tell even on those who disavowed or resisted Tractarian doctrines. The vibration of an intellectual movement was felt from the golden head to the miry toes of the Establishment; and so it came to pass that, in the district round Milby, the market-town close to Shepperton, the clergy had agreed to have a clerical meeting every month wherein they would exercise their intellects by discussing theological and ecclesiastical questions, and cement their brotherly love by discussing a good dinner. A Book Society naturally suggested itself as an adjunct of this agreeable plan; and thus, you perceive, there was provision made for ample friction of the clerical mind.

Now, the Rev. Amos Barton was one of those men who have a decided will and opinion of their own; he held himself bolt upright, and had no self-distrust. He would march very determinedly along the road he thought best; but then it was wonderfully easy to convince him which *was* the best road. And so a very little unwonted reading and unwonted discussion made him see that an Episcopalian Establishment was much more than unobjectionable, and on many other points he began to feel that he held opinions a little too far-sighted and profound to be crudely and suddenly communicated to ordinary minds. He was like an onion that has been rubbed with spices; the strong original odor was blended with something new and foreign. The Low-Church onion still offended refined High-Church nostrils, and the new spice was unwelcome to the palate of the genuine onion-eater.

We will not accompany him to the Clerical Meeting to-day, because we shall probably want to go thither some day when he will be absent. And just now I am bent on introducing you to Mr. Bridmain and the Countess Czerlaski, with whom Mr. and Mrs. Barton are invited to dine to-morrow.

CHAPTER III.

Outside, the moon is shedding its cold light on the cold snow, and the white-bearded fir-trees round Camp Villa are casting a blue shadow across the white ground, while the Rev. Amos Barton and his wife are audibly crushing the crisp snow beneath their feet, as, about seven o'clock on Friday evening, they approach the door of the above-named desirable country residence, containing dining, breakfast, and drawing rooms, &c., situated only half a mile from the market-town of Milby.

Inside, there is a bright fire in the drawing-room, casting a pleasant but uncertain light on the delicate silk dress of a

lady who is reclining behind a screen in the corner of the sofa, and allowing you to discern that the hair of the gentleman who is seated in the arm-chair opposite, with a newspaper over his knees, is becoming decidedly gray. A little "King Charles," with a crimson ribbon round his neck, who has been lying curled up in the very middle of the hearth-rug, has just discovered that that zone is too hot for him, and is jumping on the sofa, evidently with the intention of accommodating his person on the silk gown. On the table there are two wax-candles, which will be lighted as soon as the expected knock is heard at the door.

The knock is heard, the candles are lighted, and presently Mr. and Mrs. Barton are ushered in — Mr. Barton erect and clerical, in a faultless tie and shining cranium; Mrs. Barton graceful in a newly turned black silk.

"Now this is charming of you," said the Countess Czerlaski, advancing to meet them, and embracing Milly with careful elegance. "I am really ashamed of my selfishness in asking my friends to come and see me in this frightful weather." Then, giving her hand to Amos, "And you, Mr. Barton, whose time is so precious! But I am doing a good deed in drawing you away from your labors. I have a plot to prevent you from martyrizing yourself."

While this greeting was going forward, Mr. Bridmain, and Jet the spaniel, looked on with the air of actors who had no idea of by-play. Mr. Bridmain, a stiff and rather thick-set man, gave his welcome with a labored cordiality. It was astonishing how very little he resembled his beautiful sister.

For the Countess Czerlaski was undeniably beautiful. As she seated herself by Mrs. Barton on the sofa, Milly's eyes, indeed, rested — must it be confessed? — chiefly on the details of the tasteful dress, the rich silk of a pinkish lilac hue (the Countess always wore delicate colors in an evening), the black lace pelerine, and the black lace veil falling at the back of the small closely braided head. For Milly had one weakness — don't love her any the less for it, it was a pretty woman's weakness — she was fond of dress; and often, when she was making up her own economical millinery, she had romantic

visions how nice it would be to put on really handsome stylish things — to have very stiff balloon sleeves, for example, without which a woman's dress was nought in those days. You and I, too, reader, have our weakness, have we not? which makes us think foolish things now and then. Perhaps it may lie in an excessive admiration for small hands and feet, a tall lithe figure, large dark eyes, and dark silken braided hair. All these the Countess possessed, and she had, moreover, a delicately formed nose, the least bit curved, and a clear brunette complexion. Her mouth, it must be admitted, receded too much from her nose and chin, and to a prophetic eye threatened "nut-crackers" in advanced age. But by the light of fire and wax-candles that age seemed very far off indeed, and you would have said that the Countess was not more than thirty.

Look at the two women on the sofa together! The large, fair, mild-eyed Milly is timid even in friendship: it is not easy to her to speak of the affection of which her heart is full. The lithe, dark, thin-lipped Countess is racking her small brain for caressing words and charming exaggerations.

"And how are all the cherubs at home?" said the Countess, stooping to pick up Jet, and without waiting for an answer. "I have been kept in-doors by a cold ever since Sunday, or I should not have rested without seeing you. What have you done with those wretched singers, Mr. Barton?"

"Oh, we have got a new choir together, which will go on very well with a little practice. I was quite determined that the old set of singers should be dismissed. I had given orders that they should not sing the wedding psalm, as they call it, again, to make a new-married couple look ridiculous, and they sang it in defiance of me. I could put them into the Ecclesiastical Court, if I chose for to do so, for lifting up their voices in church in opposition to the clergyman."

"And a most wholesome discipline that would be," said the Countess; "indeed, you are too patient and forbearing. Mr. Barton. For my part, *I* lose *my* temper when I see how far you are from being appreciated in that miserable Shepperton."

If, as is probable, Mr. Barton felt at a loss what to say in

reply to the insinuated compliment, it was a relief to him that dinner was announced just then, and that he had to offer his arm to the Countess.

As Mr. Bridmain was leading Mrs. Barton to the dining-room, he observed, "The weather is very severe."

"Very, indeed," said Milly.

Mr. Bridmain studied conversation as an art. To ladies he spoke of the weather, and was accustomed to consider it under three points of view: as a question of climate in general, comparing England with other countries in this respect; as a personal question, inquiring how it affected his lady interlocutor in particular; and as a question of probabilities, discussing whether there would be a change or a continuance of the present atmospheric conditions. To gentlemen he talked politics, and he read two daily papers expressly to qualify himself for this function. Mr. Barton thought him a man of considerable political information, but not of lively parts.

"And so you are always to hold your Clerical Meetings at Mr. Ely's?" said the Countess, between her spoonfuls of soup. (The soup was a little over-spiced. Mrs. Short of Camp Villa, who was in the habit of letting her best apartments, gave only moderate wages to her cook.)

"Yes," said Mr. Barton; "Milby is a central place, and there are many conveniences in having only one point of meeting."

"Well," continued the Countess, "every one seems to agree in giving the precedence to Mr. Ely. For my part, I *cannot* admire him. His preaching is too cold for me. It has no fervor — no heart. I often say to my brother, it is a great comfort to me that Shepperton Church is not too far off for us to go to; don't I, Edmund?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Bridmain; "they show us into such a bad pew at Milby — just where there is a draught from that door. I caught a stiff neck the first time I went there."

"Oh, it is the cold in the pulpit that affects me, not the cold in the pew. I was writing to my friend Lady Porter this morning, and telling her all about my feelings. She and I think alike on such matters. She is most anxious that when

Sir William has an opportunity of giving away the living at their place, Dippley, they should have a thoroughly zealous, clever man, there. I have been describing a certain friend of mine to her, who, I think, would be just to her mind. And there is such a pretty rectory, Milly; should n't I like to see you the mistress of it?"

Milly smiled and blushed slightly. The Rev. Amos blushed very red, and gave a little embarrassed laugh — he could rarely keep his muscles within the limits of a smile.

At this moment John, the man-servant, approached Mrs. Barton with a gravy-tureen, and also with a slight odor of the stable, which usually adhered to him throughout his in-door functions. John was rather nervous; and the Countess, happening to speak to him at this inopportune moment, the tureen slipped and emptied itself on Mrs. Barton's newly turned black silk.

"Oh, horror! Tell Alice to come directly and rub Mrs. Barton's dress," said the Countess to the trembling John, carefully abstaining from approaching the gravy-sprinkled spot on the floor with her own lilac silk. But Mr. Bridmain, who had a strictly private interest in silks, good-naturedly jumped up and applied his napkin at once to Mrs. Barton's gown.

Milly felt a little inward anguish, but no ill-temper, and tried to make light of the matter for the sake of John as well as others. The Countess felt inwardly thankful that her own delicate silk had escaped, but threw out lavish interjections of distress and indignation.

"Dear saint that you are," she said, when Milly laughed, and suggested that, as her silk was not very glossy to begin with, the dim patch would not be much seen; "you don't mind about these things, I know. Just the same sort of thing happened to me at the Princess Wengstein's one day, on a pink satin. I was in an agony. But you are so indifferent to dress; and well you may be. It is you who make dress pretty, and not dress that makes you pretty."

Alice, the buxom lady's-maid, wearing a much better dress than Mrs. Barton's, now appeared to take Mr. Bridmain's place

in retrieving the mischief, and after a great amount of supplementary rubbing, composure was restored, and the business of dining was continued.

When John was recounting his accident to the cook in the kitchen, he observed, "Mrs. Barton's a hamable woman; I 'd a deal sooner ha' throwed the gravy o'er the Countess's fine gownd. But laws! what tantrums she 'd ha' been in arter the visitors was gone."

"You 'd a deal sooner not ha' throwed it down at all, *I* should think," responded the unsympathetic cook, to whom John did *not* make love. "Who d' you think 's to make gravy anuff, if you 're to baste people's gownds wi' it?"

"Well," suggested John, humbly, "you should wet the bottom of the *duree* a bit, to hold it from slippin'."

"Wet your granny!" returned the cook; a retort which she probably regarded in the light of a *reductio ad absurdum*, and which in fact reduced John to silence.

Later on in the evening, while John was removing the tea-things from the drawing-room, and brushing the crumbs from the table-cloth with an accompanying hiss, such as he was wont to encourage himself with in rubbing down Mr. Bridmain's horse, the Rev. Amos Barton drew from his pocket a thin green-covered pamphlet, and, presenting it to the Countess, said —

"You were pleased, I think, with my sermon on Christmas Day. It has been printed in 'The Pulpit,' and I thought you might like a copy."

"That indeed I shall. I shall quite value the opportunity of reading that sermon. There was such depth in it! — such argument! It was not a sermon to be heard only once. I am delighted that it should become generally known, as it will be, now it is printed in 'The Pulpit.'"

"Yes," said Milly, innocently, "I was so pleased with the editor's letter." And she drew out her little pocket-book, where she carefully treasured the editorial autograph, while Mr. Barton laughed and blushed, and said, "Nonsense, Milly!"

"You see," she said, giving the letter to the Countess, "I am very proud of the praise my husband gets."

The sermon in question, by the bye, was an extremely argumentative one on the Incarnation; which, as it was preached to a congregation not one of whom had any doubt of that doctrine, and to whom the Socinians therein confuted were as unknown as the Arimaspians, was exceedingly well adapted to trouble and confuse the Sheppertonian mind.

"Ah," said the Countess, returning the editor's letter, "he may well say he will be glad of other sermons from the same source. But I would rather you should publish your sermons in an independent volume, Mr. Barton; it would be so desirable to have them in that shape. For instance, I could send a copy to the Dean of Radborough. And there is Lord Blarney, whom I knew before he was Chancellor. I was a special favorite of his, and you can't think what sweet things he used to say to me. I shall not resist the temptation to write to him one of these days *sans façon*, and tell him how he ought to dispose of the next vacant living in his gift."

Whether Jet the spaniel, being a much more knowing dog than was suspected, wished to express his disapproval of the Countess's last speech, as not accordant with his ideas of wisdom and veracity, I cannot say; but at this moment he jumped off her lap, and turning his back upon her, placed one paw on the fender, and held the other up to warm, as if affecting to abstract himself from the current of conversation.

But now Mr. Bridmain brought out the chess-board, and Mr. Barton accepted his challenge to play a game, with immense satisfaction. The Rev. Amos was very fond of chess, as most people are who can continue through many years to create interesting vicissitudes in the game, by taking long-meditated moves with their knights, and subsequently discovering that they have thereby exposed their queen.

Chess is a silent game; and the Countess's chat with Milly is in quite an under-tone — probably relating to women's matters that it would be impertinent for us to listen to; so we will leave Camp Villa, and proceed to Milby Vicarage, where Mr. Farquhar has sat out two other guests with whom he has been dining at Mr. Ely's, and is now rather wearying that reverend gentleman by his protracted small-talk.

Mr. Ely was a tall, dark-haired, distinguished-looking man of three-and-thirty. By the laity of Milby and its neighborhood he was regarded as a man of quite remarkable powers and learning, who must make a considerable sensation in London pulpits and drawing-rooms on his occasional visits to the metropolis; and by his brother clergy he was regarded as a discreet and agreeable fellow. Mr. Ely never got into a warm discussion; he suggested what might be thought, but rarely said what he thought himself; he never let either men or women see that he was laughing at them, and he never gave any one an opportunity of laughing at *him*. In one thing only he was injudicious. He parted his dark wavy hair down the middle; and as his head was rather flat than otherwise, that style of coiffure was not advantageous to him.

Mr. Farquhar, though not a parishioner of Mr. Ely's, was one of his warmest admirers, and thought he would make an unexceptionable son-in-law, in spite of his being of no particular "family." Mr. Farquhar was susceptible on the point of "blood" — his own circulating fluid, which animated a short and somewhat flabby person, being, he considered, of very superior quality.

"By the bye," he said, with a certain pomposity counteracted by a lisp, "what an ath Barton makth of himthelf, about that Bridmain and the Counteth, ath she callth herthelf. After you were gone the other evening, Mithith Farquhar wath telling him the general opinion about them in the neighborhood, and he got quite red and angry. Bleth your thoul, he believeth the whole thtory about her Polish huthband and hith wonderful ethcapeth; and ath for her — why, he thinkth her perfection, a woman of motht refined feelingth, and no end of thtuff."

Mr. Ely smiled. "Some people would say our friend Barton was not the best judge of refinement. Perhaps the lady flatters him a little, and we men are susceptible. She goes to Shepperton Church every Sunday — drawn there, let us suppose, by Mr. Barton's eloquence."

"Pthaw," said Mr. Farquhar: "now, to my mind, you have only to look at that woman to thee what she ith — throwing

her eyth about when she comth into church, and drething in a way to attract attention. I should thay, she'th tired of her brother Bridmain and looking out for another brother with a thtronger family likeneth. Mithith Farquhar ith very fond of Mithith Barton, and ith quite dithtrethed that she should athothiate with thuch a woman, tho she attacked him on the thubject purpothly. But I tell her it'th of no uthe, with a pig-headed fellow like him. Barton 'th well-meaning enough, but *tho* contheited. I 've left off giving him my advithe."

Mr. Ely smiled inwardly and said to himself, "What a punishment!" But to Mr. Farquhar he said, "Barton might be more judicious, it must be confessed." He was getting tired, and did not want to develop the subject.

"Why, nobody vithit-th them but the Bartonth," continued Mr. Farquhar, "and why should thuch people come here, unleth they had particular reathonth for preferring a neighborhood where they are not known? Pooh! it lookth bad on the very fathe of it. *You* called on them, now; how did you find them?"

"Oh! — Mr. Bridmain strikes me as a common sort of man, who is making an effort to seem wise and well-bred. He comes down on one tremendously with political information, and seems knowing about the king of the French. The Countess is certainly a handsome woman, but she puts on the grand air a little too powerfully. Woodcock was immensely taken with her, and insisted on his wife's calling on her and asking her to dinner; but I think Mrs. Woodcock turned restive after the first visit, and would n't invite her again."

"Ha, ha! Woodcock hath alwayth a thoft place in hith heart for a pretty fathe. It'-th odd how he came to marry that plain woman, and no fortune either."

"Mysteries of the tender passion," said Mr. Ely. "I am not initiated yet, you know."

Here Mr. Farquhar's carriage was announced, and as we have not found his conversation particularly brilliant under the stimulus of Mr. Ely's exceptional presence, we will not

accompany him home to the less exciting atmosphere of domestic life.

Mr. Ely threw himself with a sense of relief into his easiest chair, set his feet on the hobs, and in this attitude of bachelor enjoyment began to read Bishop Jebb's Memoirs.

CHAPTER IV.

I AM by no means sure that if the good people of Milby had known the truth about the Countess Czerlaski, they would not have been considerably disappointed to find that it was very far from being as bad as they imagined. Nice distinctions are troublesome. It is so much easier to say that a thing is black, than to discriminate the particular shade of brown, blue, or green, to which it really belongs. It is so much easier to make up your mind that your neighbor is good for nothing, than to enter into all the circumstances that would oblige you to modify that opinion.

Besides, think of all the virtuous declamation, all the penetrating observation, which had been built up entirely on the fundamental position that the Countess was a very objectionable person indeed, and which would be utterly overturned and nullified by the destruction of that premiss. Mrs. Phipps, the banker's wife, and Mrs. Landor, the attorney's wife, had invested part of their reputation for acuteness in the supposition that Mr. Bridmain was not the Countess's brother. Moreover, Miss Phipps was conscious that if the Countess was not a disreputable person, she, Miss Phipps, had no compensating superiority in virtue to set against the other lady's manifest superiority in personal charms. Miss Phipps's stumpy figure and unsuccessful attire, instead of looking down from a mount of virtue with an aureole round its head, would then be seen on the same level and in the same light as

the Countess Czerlaski's Diana-like form and well-chosen drapery. Miss Phipps, for her part, did n't like dressing for effect — she had always avoided that style of appearance which was calculated to create a sensation.

Then what amusing innuendoes of the Milby gentlemen over their wine would have been entirely frustrated and reduced to nought, if you had told them that the Countess had really been guilty of no misdemeanors which demanded her exclusion from strictly respectable society; that her husband had been the veritable Count Czerlaski, who had had wonderful escapes, as she said, and who, as she did *not* say, but as was said in certain circulars once folded by her fair hands, had subsequently given dancing lessons in the metropolis; that Mr. Bridmain was neither more nor less than her half-brother, who, by unimpeached integrity and industry, had won a partnership in a silk-manufactory, and thereby a moderate fortune, that enabled him to retire, as you see, to study politics, the weather, and the art of conversation at his leisure. Mr. Bridmain, in fact, quadragenarian bachelor as he was, felt extremely well pleased to receive his sister in her widowhood, and to shine in the reflected light of her beauty and title. Every man who is not a monster, a mathematician, or a mad philosopher, is the slave of some woman or other. Mr. Bridmain had put his neck under the yoke of his handsome sister, and though his soul was a very little one — of the smallest description indeed — he would not have ventured to call it his own. He might be slightly recalcitrant now and then, as is the habit of long-eared pachyderms, under the thong of the fair Countess's tongue; but there seemed little probability that he would ever get his neck loose. Still, a bachelor's heart is an outlying fortress that some fair enemy may any day take either by storm or stratagem; and there was always the possibility that Mr. Bridmain's first nuptials might occur before the Countess was quite sure of her second. As it was, however, he submitted to all his sister's caprices, never grumbled because her dress and her maid formed a considerable item beyond her own little income of sixty pounds per annum, and consented to

lead with her a migratory life, as personages on the debatable ground between aristocracy and commonalty, instead of settling in some spot where his five hundred a-year might have won him the definite dignity of a parochial magnate.

The Countess had her views in choosing a quiet provincial place like Milby. After three years of widowhood, she had brought her feelings to contemplate giving a successor to her lamented Czerlaski, whose fine whiskers, fine air, and romantic fortunes had won her heart ten years ago, when, as pretty Caroline Bridmain, in the full bloom of five-and-twenty, she was governess to Lady Porter's daughters, whom he initiated into the mysteries of the *pas de basque*, and the Lancers' quadrilles. She had had seven years of sufficiently happy matrimony with Czerlaski, who had taken her to Paris and Germany, and introduced her there to many of his old friends with large titles and small fortunes. So that the fair Caroline had had considerable experience of life, and had gathered therefrom, not, indeed, any very ripe and comprehensive wisdom, but much external polish, and certain practical conclusions of a very decided kind. One of these conclusions was, that there were things more solid in life than fine whiskers and a title, and that, in accepting a second husband, she would regard these items as quite subordinate to a carriage and a settlement. Now, she had ascertained, by tentative residences, that the kind of bite she was angling for was difficult to be met with at watering-places, which were already preoccupied with abundance of angling beauties, and were chiefly stocked with men whose whiskers might be dyed, and whose incomes were still more problematic; so she had determined on trying a neighborhood where people were extremely well acquainted with each other's affairs, and where the women were mostly ill-dressed and ugly. Mr. Bridmain's slow brain had adopted his sister's views, and it seemed to him that a woman so handsome and distinguished as the Countess must certainly make a match that might lift himself into the region of county celebrities, and give him at least a sort of cousinship to the quarter-sessions.

All this, which was the simple truth, would have seemed

extremely flat to the gossips of Milby, who had made up their minds to something much more exciting. There was nothing here so very detestable. It is true, the Countess was a little vain, a little ambitious, a little selfish, a little shallow and frivolous, a little given to white lies. — But who considers such slight blemishes, such moral pimples as these, disqualifications for entering into the most respectable society! Indeed, the severest ladies in Milby would have been perfectly aware that these characteristics would have created no wide distinction between the Countess Czerlaski and themselves; and since it was clear there *was* a wide distinction — why, it must lie in the possession of some vices from which they were undeniably free.

Hence it came to pass that Milby respectability refused to recognize the Countess Czerlaski, in spite of her assiduous church-going, and the deep disgust she was known to have expressed at the extreme paucity of the congregations on Ash Wednesdays. So she began to feel that she had miscalculated the advantages of a neighborhood where people are well acquainted with each other's private affairs. Under these circumstances, you will imagine how welcome was the perfect credence and admiration she met with from Mr. and Mrs. Barton. She had been especially irritated by Mr. Ely's behavior to her; she felt sure that he was not in the least struck with her beauty, that he quizzed her conversation, and that he spoke of her with a sneer. A woman always knows where she is utterly powerless, and shuns a coldly satirical eye as she would shun a Gorgon. And she was especially eager for clerical notice and friendship, not merely because that is quite the most respectable countenance to be obtained in society, but because she really cared about religious matters, and had an uneasy sense that she was not altogether safe in that quarter. She had serious intentions of becoming *quite* pious — without any reserves — when she had once got her carriage and settlement. Let us do this one sly trick, says Ulysses to Neoptolemus, and we will be perfectly honest ever after —

> ἀλλ' ἡδὺ γάρ τοι κτῆμα της νίκης λαβεῖν,
> τόλμα· δίκαιοι δ' αὖθις ἐκφανούμεθα.

The Countess did not quote Sophocles, but she said to herself, "Only this little bit of pretence and vanity, and then I will be *quite* good, and make myself quite safe for another world."

And as she had by no means such fine taste and insight in theological teaching as in costume, the Rev. Amos Barton seemed to her a man not only of learning — *that* is always understood with a clergyman — but of much power as a spiritual director. As for Milly, the Countess really loved her as well as the preoccupied state of her affections would allow. For you have already perceived that there was one being to whom the Countess was absorbingly devoted, and to whose desires she made everything else subservient — namely, Caroline Czerlaski, *née* Bridmain.

Thus there was really not much affectation in her sweet speeches and attentions to Mr. and Mrs. Barton. Still their friendship by no means adequately represented the object she had in view when she came to Milby, and it had been for some time clear to her that she must suggest a new change of residence to her brother.

The thing we look forward to often comes to pass, but never precisely in the way we have imagined to ourselves. The Countess did actually leave Camp Villa before many months were past, but under circumstances which had not at all entered into her contemplation.

CHAPTER V.

The Rev. Amos Barton, whose sad fortunes I have undertaken to relate, was, you perceive, in no respect an ideal or exceptional character; and perhaps I am doing a bold thing to bespeak your sympathy on behalf of a man who was so very far from remarkable, — a man whose virtues were not

heroic, and who had no undetected crime within his breast; who had not the slightest mystery hanging about him, but was palpably and unmistakably commonplace; who was not even in love, but had had that complaint favorably many years ago. "An utterly uninteresting character!" I think I hear a lady reader exclaim — Mrs. Farthingale, for example, who prefers the ideal in fiction; to whom tragedy means ermine tippets, adultery, and murder; and comedy, the adventures of some personage who is quite a "character."

But, my dear madam, it is so very large a majority of your fellow-countrymen that are of this insignificant stamp. At least eighty out of a hundred of your adult male fellow-Britons returned in the last census are neither extraordinarily silly, nor extraordinarily wicked, nor extraordinarily wise; their eyes are neither deep and liquid with sentiment, nor sparkling with suppressed witticisms; they have probably had no hair-breadth escapes or thrilling adventures; their brains are certainly not pregnant with genius, and their passions have not manifested themselves at all after the fashion of a volcano. They are simply men of complexions more or less muddy, whose conversation is more or less bald and disjointed. Yet these commonplace people — many of them — bear a conscience, and have felt the sublime prompting to do the painful right; they have their unspoken sorrows, and their sacred joys; their hearts have perhaps gone out towards their first born, and they have mourned over the irreclaimable dead. Nay, is there not a pathos in their very insignificance — in our comparison of their dim and narrow existence with the glorious possibilities of that human nature which they share?

Depend upon it, you would gain unspeakably if you would learn with me to see some of the poetry and the pathos, the tragedy and the comedy, lying in the experience of a human soul that looks out through dull gray eyes, and that speaks in a voice of quite ordinary tones. In that case, I should have no fear of your not caring to know what farther befell the Rev. Amos Barton, or of your thinking the homely details I have to tell at all beneath your attention. As it is, you can, if you please, decline to pursue my story farther; and you will easily find

reading more to your taste, since I learn from the newspapers that many remarkable novels, full of striking situations, thrilling incidents, and eloquent writing, have appeared only within the last season.

Meanwhile, readers who have begun to feel an interest in the Rev. Amos Barton and his wife, will be glad to learn that Mr. Oldinport lent the twenty pounds. But twenty pounds are soon exhausted when twelve are due as back payment to the butcher, and when the possession of eight extra sovereigns in February weather is an irresistible temptation to order a new great-coat. And though Mr. Bridmain so far departed from the necessary economy entailed on him by the Countess's elegant toilet and expensive maid, as to choose a handsome black silk, stiff, as his experienced eye discerned, with the genuine strength of its own texture, and not with the factitious strength of gum, and present it to Mrs. Barton, in retrieval of the accident that had occurred at his table, yet, dear me — as every husband has heard — what is the present of a gown when you are deficiently furnished with the et-ceteras of apparel, and when, moreover, there are six children whose wear and tear of clothes is something incredible to the non-maternal mind?

Indeed, the equation of income and expenditure was offering new and constantly accumulating difficulties to Mr. and Mrs. Barton; for shortly after the birth of little Walter, Milly's aunt, who had lived with her ever since her marriage, had withdrawn herself, her furniture, and her yearly income, to the household of another niece; prompted to that step, very probably, by a slight "tiff" with the Rev. Amos, which occurred while Milly was up-stairs, and proved one too many for the elderly lady's patience and magnanimity. Mr. Barton's temper was a little warm, but, on the other hand, elderly maiden ladies are known to be susceptible; so we will not suppose that all the blame lay on his side — the less so, as he had every motive for humoring an inmate whose presence kept the wolf from the door. It was now nearly a year since Miss Jackson's departure, and, to a fine ear, the howl of the wolf was audibly approaching.

It was a sad thing, too, that when the last snow had melted,

when the purple and yellow crocuses were coming up in the garden, and the old church was already half pulled down, Milly had an illness which made her lips look pale, and rendered it absolutely necessary that she should not exert herself for some time. Mr. Brand, the Shepperton doctor so obnoxious to Mr. Pilgrim, ordered her to drink port-wine, and it was quite necessary to have a charwoman very often, to assist Nanny in all the extra work that fell upon her.

Mrs. Hackit, who hardly ever paid a visit to any one but her oldest and nearest neighbor, Mrs. Patten, now took the unusual step of calling at the vicarage one morning; and the tears came into her unsentimental eyes as she saw Milly seated pale and feeble in the parlor, unable to persevere in sewing the pinafore that lay on the table beside her. Little Dickey, a boisterous boy of five, with large pink cheeks and sturdy legs, was having his turn to sit with Mamma, and was squatting quiet as a mouse at her knee, holding her soft white hand between his little red black-nailed fists. He was a boy whom Mrs. Hackit, in a severe mood, had pronounced "stocky" (a word that etymologically, in all probability, conveys some allusion to an instrument of punishment for the refractory); but seeing him thus subdued into goodness, she smiled at him with her kindest smile, and, stooping down, suggested a kiss — a favor which Dickey resolutely declined.

"Now *do* you take nourishing things enough?" was one of Mrs. Hackit's first questions, and Milly endeavored to make it appear that no woman was ever so much in danger of being over-fed and led into self-indulgent habits as herself. But Mrs. Hackit gathered one fact from her replies, namely, that Mr. Brand had ordered port-wine.

While this conversation was going forward, Dickey had been furtively stroking and kissing the soft white hand; so that at last, when a pause came, his mother said, smilingly, "Why are you kissing my hand, Dickey?"

"It id *to* yovely," answered Dickey, who, you observe, was decidedly backward in his pronunciation.

Mrs. Hackit remembered this little scene in after days, and thought with peculiar tenderness and pity of the "stocky boy."

The next day there came a hamper with Mrs. Hackit's respects; and on being opened it was found to contain half-a-dozen of port-wine and two couples of fowls. Mrs. Farquhar, too, was very kind; insisted on Mrs. Barton's rejecting all arrowroot but hers, which was genuine Indian, and carried away Sophy and Fred to stay with her a fortnight. These and other good-natured attentions made the trouble of Milly's illness more bearable; but they could not prevent it from swelling expenses, and Mr. Barton began to have serious thoughts of representing his case to a certain charity for the relief of needy curates.

Altogether, as matters stood in Shepperton, the parishioners were more likely to have a strong sense that the clergyman needed their material aid, than that they needed his spiritual aid, — not the best state of things in this age and country, where faith in men solely on the ground of their spiritual gifts has considerably diminished, and especially unfavorable to the influence of the Rev. Amos, whose spiritual gifts would not have had a very commanding power even in an age of faith.

But, you ask, did not the Countess Czerlaski pay any attention to her friends all this time? To be sure she did. She was indefatigable in visiting her "sweet Milly," and sitting with her for hours together. It may seem remarkable to you that she neither thought of taking away any of the children, nor of providing for any of Milly's probable wants; but ladies of rank and of luxurious habits, you know, cannot be expected to surmise the details of poverty. She put a great deal of eau-de-Cologne on Mrs. Barton's pocket-handkerchief, rearranged her pillow and footstool, kissed her cheeks, wrapped her in a soft warm shawl from her own shoulders, and amused her with stories of the life she had seen abroad. When Mr. Barton joined them she talked of Tractarianism, of her determination not to re-enter the vortex of fashionable life, and of her anxiety to see him in a sphere large enough for his talents. Milly thought her sprightliness and affectionate warmth quite charming, and was very fond of her; while the Rev. Amos had a vague consciousness that he had risen into aristocratic

life, and only associated with his middle-class parishioners in a pastoral and parenthetic manner.

However, as the days brightened, Milly's cheeks and lips brightened too; and in a few weeks she was almost as active as ever, though watchful eyes might have seen that activity was not easy to her. Mrs. Hackit's eyes were of that kind, and one day, when Mr. and Mrs. Barton had been dining with her for the first time since Milly's illness, she observed to her husband — "That poor thing 's dreadful weak an' dilicate; she won't stan' havin' many more children."

Mr. Barton, meanwhile, had been indefatigable in his vocation. He had preached two extemporary sermons every Sunday at the workhouse, where a room had been fitted up for divine service, pending the alterations in the church; and had walked the same evening to a cottage at one or other extremity of his parish to deliver another sermon, still more extemporary, in an atmosphere impregnated with spring-flowers and perspiration. After all these labors you will easily conceive that he was considerably exhausted by half-past nine o'clock in the evening, and that a supper at a friendly parishioner's, with a glass, or even two glasses, of brandy-and-water after it, was a welcome reinforcement. Mr. Barton was not at all an ascetic; he thought the benefits of fasting were entirely confined to the Old Testament dispensation; he was fond of relaxing himself with a little gossip; indeed, Miss Bond, and other ladies of enthusiastic views, sometimes regretted that Mr. Barton did not more uninterruptedly exhibit a superiority to the things of the flesh. Thin ladies, who take little exercise, and whose livers are not strong enough to bear stimulants, are so extremely critical about one's personal habits! And, after all, the Rev. Amos never came near the borders of a vice. His very faults were middling — he was not *very* ungrammatical. It was not in his nature to be superlative in anything; unless, indeed, he was superlatively middling, the quintessential extract of mediocrity. If there was any one point on which he showed an inclination to be excessive, it was confidence in his own shrewdness and ability in practical matters, so that he was very full of plans which were some-

thing like his moves in chess — admirably well calculated, supposing the state of the case were otherwise. For example, that notable plan of introducing anti-Dissenting books into his Lending Library did not in the least appear to have bruised the head of Dissent, though it had certainly made Dissent strongly inclined to bite the Rev. Amos's heel. Again, he vexed the souls of his churchwardens and influential parishioners by his fertile suggestiveness as to what it would be well for them to do in the matter of the church repairs, and other ecclesiastical secularities.

"I never saw the like to parsons," Mr. Hackit said one day in conversation with his brother churchwarden, Mr. Bond; "they 're al'ys for meddling with business, an' they know no more about it than my black filly."

"Ah," said Mr. Bond, "they 're too high learnt to have much common-sense."

"Well," remarked Mr. Hackit, in a modest and dubious tone, as if throwing out a hypothesis which might be considered bold, "I should say that 's a bad sort of eddication as makes folks unreasonable."

So that, you perceive, Mr. Barton's popularity was in that precarious condition, in that toppling and contingent state, in which a very slight push from a malignant destiny would utterly upset it. That push was not long in being given, as you shall hear.

One fine May morning, when Amos was out on his parochial visits, and the sunlight was streaming through the bow-window of the sitting-room, where Milly was seated at her sewing, occasionally looking up to glance at the children playing in the garden, there came a loud rap at the door, which she at once recognized as the Countess's, and that well-dressed lady presently entered the sitting-room, with her veil drawn over her face. Milly was not at all surprised or sorry to see her; but when the Countess threw up her veil, and showed that her eyes were red and swollen, she was both surprised and sorry.

"What can be the matter, dear Caroline?"

Caroline threw down Jet, who gave a little yelp; then she threw her arms round Milly's neck, and began to sob; then

she threw herself on the sofa, and begged for a glass of water; then she threw off her bonnet and shawl; and by the time Milly's imagination had exhausted itself in conjuring up calamities she said —

"Dear, how shall I tell you? I am the most wretched woman. To be deceived by a brother to whom I have been so devoted — to see him degrading himself — giving himself utterly to the dogs!"

"What can it be?" said Milly, who began to picture to herself the sober Mr. Bridmain taking to brandy and betting.

"He is going to be married — to marry my own maid, that deceitful Alice, to whom I have been the most indulgent mistress. Did you ever hear of anything so disgraceful? so mortifying? so disreputable?"

"And has he only just told you of it?" said Milly, who, having really heard of worse conduct, even in her innocent life, avoided a direct answer.

"Told me of it! he had not even the grace to do that. I went into the dining-room suddenly and found him kissing her — disgusting at his time of life, is it not? — and when I reproved her for allowing such liberties, she turned round saucily, and said she was engaged to be married to my brother, and she saw no shame in allowing him to kiss her. Edmund is a miserable coward, you know, and looked frightened; but when she asked him to say whether it was not so, he tried to summon up courage and say yes. I left the room in disgust, and this morning I have been questioning Edmund, and find that he is bent on marrying this woman, and that he has been putting off telling me — because he was ashamed of himself, I suppose. I could n't possibly stay in the house after this, with my own maid turned mistress. And now, Milly, I am come to throw myself on your charity for a week or two. *Will* you take me in?"

"That we will," said Milly, "if you will only put up with our poor rooms and way of living. It will be delightful to have you!"

"It will soothe me to be with you and Mr. Barton a little while. I feel quite unable to go among my other friends just

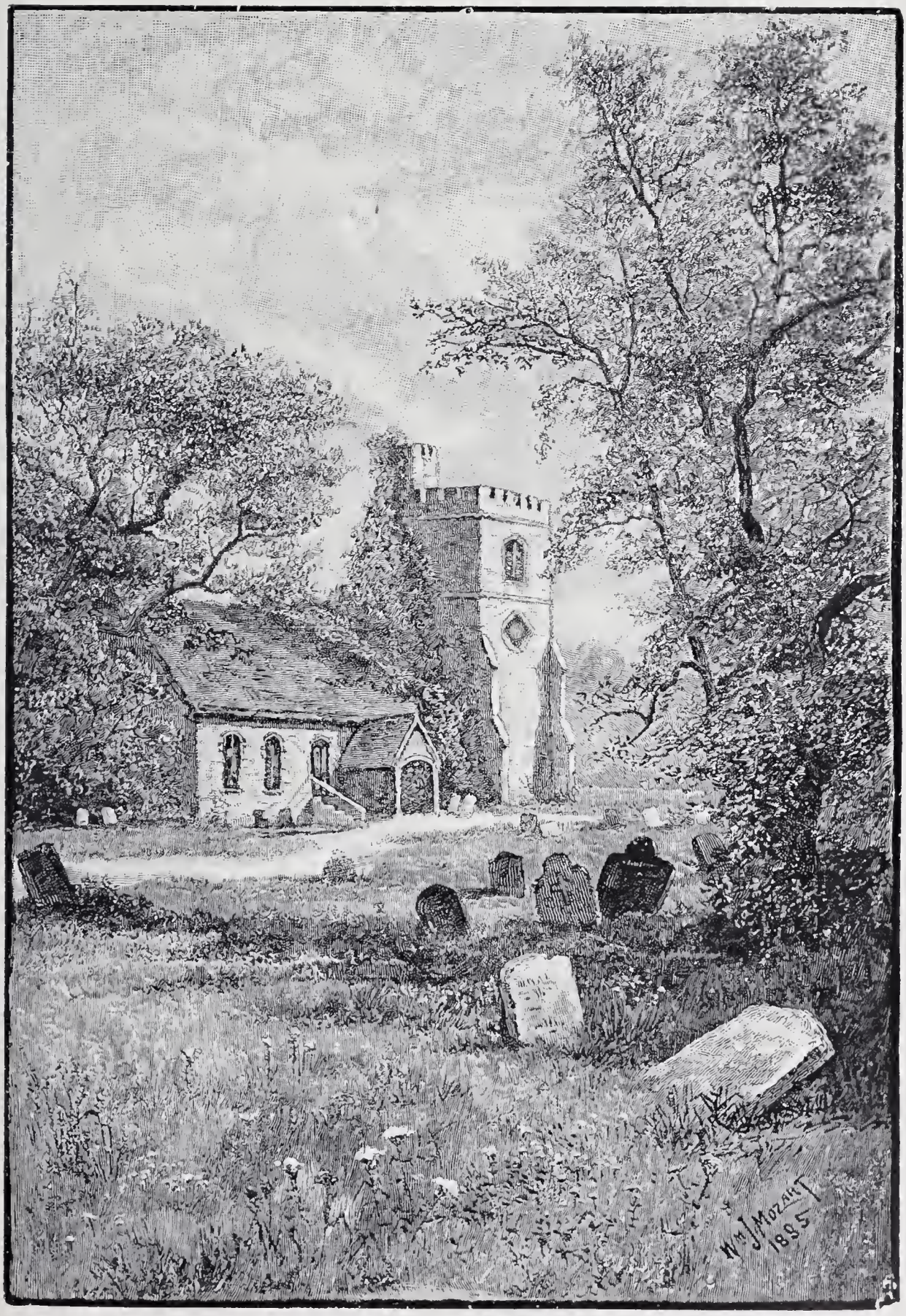
at present. What those two wretched people will do I don't know — leave the neighborhood at once, I hope. I entreated my brother to do so, before he disgraced himself."

When Amos came home, he joined his cordial welcome and sympathy to Milly's. By-and-by the Countess's formidable boxes, which she had carefully packed before her indignation drove her away from Camp Villa, arrived at the vicarage, and were deposited in the spare bedroom, and in two closets, not spare, which Milly emptied for their reception. A week afterwards, the excellent apartments at Camp Villa, comprising dining and drawing rooms, three bedrooms and a dressing-room, were again to let, and Mr. Bridmain's sudden departure, together with the Countess Czerlaski's installation as a visitor at Shepperton Vicarage, became a topic of general conversation in the neighborhood. The keen-sighted virtue of Milby and Shepperton saw in all this a confirmation of its worst suspicions, and pitied the Rev. Amos Barton's gullibility.

But when week after week, and month after month, slipped by without witnessing the Countess's departure — when summer and harvest had fled, and still left her behind them occupying the spare bedroom and the closets, and also a large proportion of Mrs. Barton's time and attention, new surmises of a very evil kind were added to the old rumors, and began to take the form of settled convictions in the minds even of Mr. Barton's most friendly parishioners.

And now, here is an opportunity for an accomplished writer to apostrophize calumny, to quote Virgil, and to show that he is acquainted with the most ingenious things which have been said on that subject in polite literature.

But what is opportunity to the man who can't use it? An unfecundated egg, which the waves of time wash away into nonentity. So, as my memory is ill-furnished, and my note-book still worse, I am unable to show myself either erudite or eloquent apropos of the calumny whereof the Rev. Amos Barton was the victim. I can only ask my reader, — did you ever upset your ink-bottle, and watch, in helpless agony, the rapid spread of Stygian blackness over your fair manuscript or fairer table-cover? With a like inky swiftness did gossip



Shepperton Church.

now blacken the reputation of the Rev. Amos Barton, causing the unfriendly to scorn and even the friendly to stand aloof, at a time when difficulties of another kind were fast thickening around him.

CHAPTER VI.

One November morning, at least six months after the Countess Czerlaski had taken up her residence at the vicarage, Mrs. Hackit heard that her neighbor Mrs. Patten had an attack of her old complaint, vaguely called "the spasms." Accordingly, about eleven o'clock, she put on her velvet bonnet and cloth cloak, with a long boa and muff large enough to stow a prize baby in; for Mrs. Hackit regulated her costume by the calendar, and brought out her furs on the first of November, whatever might be the temperature. She was not a woman weakly to accommodate herself to shilly-shally proceedings. If the season did n't know what it ought to do, Mrs. Hackit did. In her best days, it was always sharp weather at "Gunpowder Plot," and she did n't like new fashions.

And this morning the weather was very rationally in accordance with her costume, for as she made her way through the fields to Cross Farm, the yellow leaves on the hedge-girt elms which showed bright and golden against the low-hanging purple clouds, were being scattered across the grassy path by the coldest of November winds. "Ah," Mrs. Hackit thought to herself, "I dare say we shall have a sharp pinch this winter, and if we do, I should n't wonder if it takes the old lady off. They say a green Yule makes a fat churchyard; but so does a white Yule too, for that matter. When the stool 's rotten enough, no matter who sits on it."

However, on her arrival at Cross Farm, the prospect of Mrs. Patten's decease was again thrown into the dim distance in her imagination, for Miss Janet Gibbs met her with the news

that Mrs. Patten was much better, and led her, without any preliminary announcement, to the old lady's bedroom. Janet had scarcely reached the end of her circumstantial narrative how the attack came on and what were her aunt's sensations — a narrative to which Mrs. Patten, in her neatly plaited night-cap, seemed to listen with a contemptuous resignation to her niece's historical inaccuracy, contenting herself with occasionally confounding Janet by a shake of the head — when the clatter of a horse's hoofs on the yard pavement announced the arrival of Mr. Pilgrim, whose large, top-booted person presently made its appearance up-stairs. He found Mrs. Patten going on so well that there was no need to look solemn. He might glide from condolence into gossip without offence, and the tempation of having Mrs. Hackit's ear was irresistible.

"What a disgraceful business this is turning out of your parson's," was the remark with which he made this agreeable transition, throwing himself back in the chair from which he had been leaning towards the patient.

"Eh, dear me!" said Mrs. Hackit, "disgraceful enough. I stuck to Mr. Barton as long as I could, for his wife's sake; but I can't countenance such goings-on. It 's hateful to see that woman coming with 'em to service of a Sunday, and if Mr. Hackit was n't churchwarden and I did n't think it wrong to forsake one's own parish, I should go to Knebley Church. There 's a many parish'ners as do."

"I used to think Barton was only a fool," observed Mr. Pilgrim, in a tone which implied that he was conscious of having been weakly charitable. "I thought he was imposed upon and led away by those people when they first came. But that 's impossible now."

"Oh, it 's as plain as the nose in your face," said Mrs. Hackit, unreflectingly, not perceiving the equivoque in her comparison — "comin' to Milby, like a sparrow perchin' on a bough, as I may say, with her brother, as she called him; and then all on a sudden the brother goes off with himself, and she throws herself on the Bartons. Though what could make her take up with a poor notomise of a parson, as has n't got enough to keep wife and children, there 's One above knows — *I* don't."

"Mr. Barton may have attractions we don't know of," said Mr. Pilgrim, who piqued himself on a talent for sarcasm. "The Countess has no maid now, and they say Mr. Barton is handy in assisting at her toilet — laces her boots, and so forth."

"Tilette be fiddled!" said Mrs. Hackit, with indignant boldness of metaphor; "an' there 's that poor thing a-sewing her fingers to the bone for them children — an' another comin' on. What she must have to go through! It goes to my heart to turn my back on her. But she 's i' the wrong to let herself be put upon i' that manner."

"Ah! I was talking to Mrs. Farquhar about that the other day. She said, 'I think Mrs. Barton a v-e-r-y w-e-a-k w-o-m-a-n.'" (Mr. Pilgrim gave this quotation with slow emphasis, as if he thought Mrs. Farquhar had uttered a remarkable sentiment.) "They find it impossible to invite her to their house while she has that equivocal person staying with her."

"Well!" remarked Miss Gibbs, "if I was a wife, nothing should induce me to bear what Mrs. Barton does."

"Yes, it 's fine talking," said Mrs. Patten, from her pillow; "old maids' husbands are al'ys well-managed. If you was a wife you 'd be as foolish as your betters, belike."

"All my wonder is," observed Mrs. Hackit, "how the Bartons make both ends meet. You may depend on it, *she 's* got nothing to give 'em; for I understand as he 's been havin' money from some clergy charity. They said at fust as she stuffed Mr. Barton wi' notions about her writing to the Chancellor an' her fine friends, to give him a living. Howiver, I don't know what 's true an' what 's false. Mr. Barton keeps away from our house now, for I gave him a bit o' my mind one day. Maybe he 's ashamed of himself. He seems to me to look dreadful thin an' harassed of a Sunday."

"Oh, he must be aware he 's getting into bad odor everywhere. The clergy are quite disgusted with his folly. They say Carpe would be glad to get Barton out of the curacy if he could; but he can't do that without coming to Shepperton himself, as Barton 's a licensed curate; and he would n't like that, I suppose."

At this moment Mrs. Patten showed signs of uneasiness which recalled Mr. Pilgrim to professional attentions; and Mrs. Hackit, observing that it was Thursday, and she must see after the butter, said good-by, promising to look in again soon, and bring her knitting.

This Thursday, by the bye, is the first in the month — the day on which the Clerical Meeting is held at Milby Vicarage; and as the Rev. Amos Barton has reasons for not attending, he will very likely be a subject of conversation amongst his clerical brethren. Suppose we go there, and hear whether Mr. Pilgrim has reported their opinion correctly.

There is not a numerous party to-day, for it is a season of sore throats and catarrhs; so that the exegetical and theological discussions, which are the preliminary of dining, have not been quite so spirited as usual; and although a question relative to the Epistle of Jude has not been quite cleared up, the striking of six by the church clock, and the simultaneous announcement of dinner, are sounds that no one feels to be importunate.

Pleasant (when one is not in the least bilious) to enter a comfortable dining-room, where the closely drawn red curtains glow with the double light of fire and candle, where glass and silver are glittering on the pure damask, and a soup-tureen gives a hint of the fragrance that will presently rush out to inundate your hungry senses, and prepare them, by the delicate visitation of atoms, for the keen gusto of ampler contact! Especially if you have confidence in the dinner-giving capacity of your host — if you know that he is not a man who entertains grovelling views of eating and drinking as a mere satisfaction of hunger and thirst, and, dead to all the finer influences of the palate, expects his guest to be brilliant on ill-flavored gravies and the cheapest Marsala. Mr. Ely was particularly worthy of such confidence, and his virtues as an Amphitryon had probably contributed quite as much as the central situation of Milby to the selection of his house as a clerical rendezvous. He looks particularly graceful at the head of his table, and, indeed, on all occasions where he acts as president or moderator: he is a man who

seems to listen well, and is an excellent amalgam of dissimilar ingredients.

At the other end of the table, as "Vice," sits Mr. Fellowes, rector and magistrate, a man of imposing appearance, with a mellifluous voice and the readiest of tongues. Mr. Fellowes once obtained a living by the persuasive charms of his conversation, and the fluency with which he interpreted the opinions of an obese and stammering baronet, so as to give that elderly gentleman a very pleasing perception of his own wisdom. Mr. Fellowes is a very successful man, and has the highest character everywhere except in his own parish, where, doubtless because his parishioners happen to be quarrelsome people, he is always at fierce feud with a farmer or two, a colliery proprietor, a grocer who was once churchwarden, and a tailor who formerly officiated as clerk.

At Mr. Ely's right hand you see a very small man with a sallow and somewhat puffy face, whose hair is brushed straight up, evidently with the intention of giving him a height somewhat less disproportionate to his sense of his own importance than the measure of five feet three accorded him by an oversight of nature. This is the Rev. Archibald Duke, a very dyspeptic and evangelical man, who takes the gloomiest view of mankind and their prospects, and thinks the immense sale of the "Pickwick Papers," recently completed, one of the strongest proofs of original sin. Unfortunately, though Mr. Duke was not burdened with a family, his yearly expenditure was apt considerably to exceed his income; and the unpleasant circumstances resulting from this, together with heavy meat-breakfasts, may probably have contributed to his desponding views of the world generally.

Next to him is seated Mr. Furness, a tall young man, with blond hair and whiskers, who was plucked at Cambridge entirely owing to his genius; at least I know that he soon afterwards published a volume of poems, which were considered remarkably beautiful by many young ladies of his acquaintance. Mr. Furness preached his own sermons, as any one of tolerable critical acumen might have certified by comparing them with his poems: in both, there was an exuberance of

metaphor and simile entirely original, and not in the least borrowed from any resemblance in the things compared.

On Mr. Furness's left you see Mr. Pugh, another young curate, of much less marked characteristics. He had not published any poems; he had not even been plucked; he had neat black whiskers and a pale complexion; read prayers and a sermon twice every Sunday, and might be seen any day sallying forth on his parochial duties in a white tie, a well-brushed hat, a perfect suit of black, and well-polished boots — an equipment which he probably supposed hieroglyphically to represent the spirit of Christianity to the parishioners of Whittlecombe.

Mr. Pugh's *vis-à-vis* is the Rev. Martin Cleves, a man about forty — middle-sized, broad-shouldered, with a negligently tied cravat, large irregular features, and a large head thickly covered with lanky brown hair. To a superficial glance, Mr. Cleves is the plainest and least clerical-looking of the party; yet, strange to say, *there* is the true parish priest, the pastor beloved, consulted, relied on by his flock; a clergyman who is not associated with the undertaker, but thought of as the surest helper under a difficulty, as a monitor who is encouraging rather than severe. Mr. Cleves has the wonderful art of preaching sermons which the wheelwright and the blacksmith can understand; not because he talks condescending twaddle, but because he can call a spade a spade, and knows how to disencumber ideas of their wordy frippery. Look at him more attentively, and you will see that his face is a very interesting one — that there is a great deal of humor and feeling playing in his gray eyes, and about the corners of his roughly cut mouth: — a man, you observe, who has most likely sprung from the harder-working section of the middle class, and has hereditary sympathies with the checkered life of the people. He gets together the working men in his parish on a Monday evening, and gives them a sort of conversational lecture on useful practical matters, telling them stories, or reading some select passages from an agreeable book, and commenting on them; and if you were to ask the first laborer or artisan in Tripplegate what sort of man the parson was, he would say,

—"a uncommon knowin', sensible, free-spoken gentleman; very kind an' good-natur'd too." Yet for all this, he is perhaps the best Grecian of the party, if we except Mr. Baird, the young man on his left.

Mr. Baird has since gained considerable celebrity as an original writer and metropolitan lecturer, but at that time he used to preach in a little church something like a barn, to a congregation consisting of three rich farmers and their servants, about fifteen laborers, and the due proportion of women and children. The rich farmers understood him to be "very high learnt;" but if you had interrogated them for a more precise description, they would have said that he was "a thinnish-faced man, with a sort o' cast in his eye, like."

Seven, altogether: a delightful number for a dinner-party, supposing the units to be delightful, but everything depends on that. During dinner Mr. Fellowes took the lead in the conversation, which set strongly in the direction of mangold-wurzel and the rotation of crops; for Mr. Fellowes and Mr. Cleves cultivated their own glebes. Mr. Ely, too, had some agricultural notions, and even the Rev. Archibald Duke was made alive to that class of mundane subjects by the possession of some potato-ground. The two young curates talked a little aside during these discussions, which had imperfect interest for their unbeneficed minds; and the transcendental and near-sighted Mr. Baird seemed to listen somewhat abstractedly, knowing little more of potatoes and mangold-wurzel than that they were some form of the "Conditioned."

"What a hobby farming is with Lord Watling!" said Mr. Fellowes, when the cloth was being drawn. "I went over his farm at Tetterley with him last summer. It is really a model farm; first-rate dairy, grazing and wheat land, and such splendid farm-buildings! An expensive hobby, though. He sinks a good deal of money there, I fancy. He has a great whim for black cattle, and he sends that drunken old Scotch bailiff of his to Scotland every year, with hundreds in his pocket, to buy these beasts."

'By the bye," said Mr. Ely, "do you know who is the man to whom Lord Watling has given the Bramhill livings?"

"A man named Sargent. I knew him at Oxford. His brother is a lawyer, and was very useful to Lord Watling in that ugly Brounsell affair. That 's why Sargent got the living."

"Sargent," said Mr. Ely. "I know him. Is n't he a showy, talkative fellow; has written travels in Mesopotamia, or something of that sort?"

"That 's the man."

"He was at Witherington once, as Bagshawe's curate. He got into rather bad odor there, through some scandal about a flirtation, I think."

"Talking of scandal," returned Mr. Fellowes, "have you heard the last story about Barton? Nisbett was telling me the other day that he dines alone with the Countess at six, while Mrs. Barton is in the kitchen acting as cook."

"Rather an apocryphal authority, Nisbett," said Mr. Ely.

"Ah," said Mr. Cleves, with good-natured humor twinkling in his eyes, "depend upon it, that is a corrupt version. The original text is, that they all dined together *with* six — meaning six children — and that Mrs. Barton is an excellent cook."

"I wish dining alone together may be the worst of that sad business," said the Rev. Archibald Duke, in a tone implying that his wish was a strong figure of speech.

"Well," said Mr. Fellowes, filling his glass and looking jocose, "Barton is certainly either the greatest gull in existence, or he has some cunning secret, — some philtre or other to make himself charming in the eyes of a fair lady. It is n't all of us that can make conquests when our ugliness is past its bloom."

"The lady seemed to have made a conquest of him at the very outset," said Mr. Ely. "I was immensely amused one night at Granby's when he was telling us her story about her husband's adventures. He said, 'When she told me the tale, I felt I don't know how, — I felt it from the crown of my head to the sole of my feet.'"

Mr. Ely gave these words dramatically, imitating the Rev. Amos's fervor and symbolic action, and every one laughed

except Mr. Duke, whose after-dinner view of things was not apt to be jovial. He said —

"I think some of us ought to remonstrate with Mr. Barton on the scandal he is causing. He is not only imperilling his own soul, but the souls of his flock."

"Depend upon it," said Mr. Cleves, "there is some simple explanation of the whole affair, if we only happened to know it. Barton has always impressed me as a right-minded man, who has the knack of doing himself injustice by his manner."

"Now *I* never liked Barton," said Mr. Fellowes. "He 's not a gentleman. Why, he used to be on terms of intimacy with that canting Prior, who died a little while ago; — a fellow who soaked himself with spirits, and talked of the Gospel through an inflamed nose."

"The Countess has given him more refined tastes, I dare say," said Mr. Ely.

"Well," observed Mr. Cleves, "the poor fellow must have a hard pull to get along, with his small income and large family. Let us hope the Countess does something towards making the pot boil."

"Not she," said Mr. Duke; "there are greater signs of poverty about them than ever."

"Well, come," returned Mr. Cleves, who could be caustic sometimes, and who was not at all fond of his reverend brother, Mr. Duke, "that 's something in Barton's favor at all events. He might be poor *without* showing signs of poverty."

Mr. Duke turned rather yellow, which was his way of blushing, and Mr. Ely came to his relief by observing —

"They 're making a very good piece of work of Shepperton Church. Dolby, the architect, who has it in hand, is a very clever fellow."

"It 's he who has been doing Coppleton Church," said Mr. Furness. "They 've got it in excellent order for the visitation."

This mention of the visitation suggested the Bishop, and thus opened a wide duct, which entirely diverted the stream

of animadversion from that small pipe — that capillary vessel, the Rev. Amos Barton.

The talk of the clergy about their Bishop belongs to the esoteric part of their profession; so we will at once quit the dining-room at Milby Vicarage, lest we should happen to overhear remarks unsuited to the lay understanding, and perhaps dangerous to our repose of mind.

CHAPTER VII.

I DARE say the long residence of the Countess Czerlaski at Shepperton Vicarage is very puzzling to you also, dear reader, as well as to Mr. Barton's clerical brethren; the more so, as I hope you are not in the least inclined to put that very evil interpretation on it which evidently found acceptance with the sallow and dyspeptic Mr. Duke, and with the florid and highly peptic Mr. Fellowes. You have seen enough, I trust, of the Rev. Amos Barton, to be convinced that he was more apt to fall into a blunder than into a sin — more apt to be deceived than to incur a necessity for being deceitful: and if you have a keen eye for physiognomy, you will have detected that the Countess Czerlaski loved herself far too well to get entangled in an unprofitable vice.

How, then, you will say, could this fine lady choose to quarter herself on the establishment of a poor curate, where the carpets were probably falling into holes, where the attendance was limited to a maid-of-all-work, and where six children were running loose from eight o'clock in the morning till eight o'clock in the evening? Surely you must be straining probability.

Heaven forbid! For not having a lofty imagination, as you perceive, and being unable to invent thrilling incidents for your amusement, my only merit must lie in the truth with

which I represent to you the humble experience of ordinary fellow-mortals. I wish to stir your sympathy with commonplace troubles — to win your tears for real sorrow: sorrow such as may live next door to you — such as walks neither in rags nor in velvet, but in very ordinary decent apparel.

Therefore, that you may dismiss your suspicions as to the truth of my picture, I will beg you to consider, that at the time the Countess Czerlaski left Camp Villa in dudgeon, she had only twenty pounds in her pocket, being about one-third of the income she possessed independently of her brother. You will then perceive that she was in the extremely inconvenient predicament of having quarrelled, not indeed with her bread and cheese, but certainly with her chicken and tart — a predicament all the more inconvenient to her, because the habit of idleness had quite unfitted her for earning those necessary superfluities, and because, with all her fascinations, she had not secured any enthusiastic friends whose houses were open to her, and who were dying to see her. Thus she had completely checkmated herself, unless she could resolve on one unpleasant move — namely, to humble herself to her brother, and recognize his wife. This seemed quite impossible to her as long as she entertained the hope that he would make the first advances; and in this flattering hope she remained month after month at Shepperton Vicarage, gracefully overlooking the deficiencies of accommodation, and feeling that she was really behaving charmingly. "Who indeed," she thought to herself, "could do otherwise, with a lovely, gentle creature like Milly? I shall really be sorry to leave the poor thing."

So, though she lay in bed till ten, and came down to a separate breakfast at eleven, she kindly consented to dine as early as five, when a hot joint was prepared, which coldly furnished forth the children's table the next day; she considerately prevented Milly from devoting herself too closely to the children, by insisting on reading, talking, and walking with her; and she even began to embroider a cap for the next baby, which must certainly be a girl, and be named Caroline.

After the first month or two of her residence at the Vicar-

age, the Rev. Amos Barton became aware — as, indeed, it was unavoidable that he should — of the strong disapprobation it drew upon him, and the change of feeling towards him which it was producing in his kindest parishioners. But, in the first place, he still believed in the Countess as a charming and influential woman, disposed to befriend him, and, in any case, he could hardly hint departure to a lady guest who had been kind to him and his, and who might any day spontaneously announce the termination of her visit; in the second place, he was conscious of his own innocence, and felt some contemptuous indignation towards people who were ready to imagine evil of him; and, lastly, he had, as I have already intimated, a strong will of his own, so that a certain obstinacy and defiance mingled itself with his other feelings on the subject.

The one unpleasant consequence which was not to be evaded or counteracted by any mere mental state, was the increasing drain on his slender purse for household expenses, to meet which the remittance he had received from the clerical charity threatened to be quite inadequate. Slander may be defeated by equanimity; but courageous thoughts will not pay your baker's bill, and fortitude is nowhere considered legal tender for beef. Month after month the financial aspect of the Rev. Amos's affairs became more and more serious to him, and month after month, too, wore away more and more of that armor of indignation and defiance with which he had at first defended himself from the harsh looks of faces that were once the friendliest.

But quite the heaviest pressure of the trouble fell on Milly — on gentle, uncomplaining Milly — whose delicate body was becoming daily less fit for all the many things that had to be done between rising up and lying down. At first, she thought the Countess's visit would not last long, and she was quite glad to incur extra exertion for the sake of making her friend comfortable. I can hardly bear to think of all the rough work she did with those lovely hands — all by the sly, without letting her husband know anything about it, and husbands are not clairvoyant: how she salted bacon, ironed shirts and cra-

vats, put patches on patches, and re-darned darns. Then there was the task of mending and eking out baby-linen in prospect, and the problem perpetually suggesting itself how she and Nanny *should* manage when there was another baby, as there would be before very many months were past.

When time glided on, and the Countess's visit did not end, Milly was not blind to any phase of their position. She knew of the slander; she was aware of the keeping aloof of old friends; but these she felt almost entirely on her husband's account. A loving woman's world lies within the four walls of her own home; and it is only through her husband that she is in any electric communication with the world beyond. Mrs. Simpkins may have looked scornfully at her, but baby crows and holds out his little arms none the less blithely; Mrs. Tomkins may have left off calling on her, but her husband comes home none the less to receive her care and caresses; it has been wet and gloomy out of doors to-day, but she has looked well after the shirt buttons, has cut out baby's pinafores, and half finished Willy's blouse.

So it was with Milly. She was only vexed that her husband should be vexed — only wounded because he was misconceived. But the difficulty about ways and means she felt in quite a different manner. Her rectitude was alarmed lest they should have to make tradesmen wait for their money; her motherly love dreaded the diminution of comforts for the children; and the sense of her own failing health gave exaggerated force to these fears.

Milly could no longer shut her eyes to the fact, that the Countess was inconsiderate, if she did not allow herself to entertain severer thoughts; and she began to feel that it would soon be a duty to tell her frankly that they really could not afford to have her visit farther prolonged. But a process was going forward in two other minds, which ultimately saved Milly from having to perform this painful task.

In the first place, the Countess was getting weary of Shepperton — weary of waiting for her brother's overtures which never came; so, one fine morning, she reflected that forgiveness was a Christian duty, that a sister should be placable,

that Mr. Bridmain must feel the need of her advice, to which he had been accustomed for three years, and that very likely "that woman" did n't make the poor man happy. In this amiable frame of mind she wrote a very affectionate appeal, and addressed it to Mr. Bridmain, through his banker.

Another mind that was being wrought up to a climax was Nanny's, the maid-of-all-work, who had a warm heart and a still warmer temper. Nanny adored her mistress: she had been heard to say, that she was "ready to kiss the ground as the missis trod on;" and Walter, she considered, was *her* baby, of whom she was as jealous as a lover. But she had, from the first, very slight admiration for the Countess Czerlaski. That lady, from Nanny's point of view, was a personage always "drawed out i' fine clothes," the chief result of whose existence was to cause additional bed-making, carrying of hot water, laying of table-cloths, and cooking of dinners. It was a perpetually heightening "aggravation" to Nanny that she and her mistress had to "slave" more than ever, because there was this fine lady in the house.

"An' she pays nothin' for 't neither," observed Nanny to Mr. Jacob Tomms, a young gentleman in the tailoring line, who occasionally — simply out of a taste for dialogue — looked into the vicarage kitchen of an evening. "I know the master 's shorter o' money than iver, an' it meks no end o' difference i' th' housekeepin' — her bein' here, besides bein' obliged to have a charwoman constant."

"There 's fine stories i' the village about her," said Mr. Tomms. "They say as Muster Barton 's great wi' her, or else she 'd niver stop here."

"Then they say a passill o' lies, an' you ought to be ashamed to go an' tell 'em o'er again. Do *you* think as the master, as has got a wife like the missis, 'ud go running arter a stuck-up piece o' goods like that Countess, as is n't fit to black the missis's shoes? I 'm none so fond o' the master, but I know better on him nor that."

"Well, I did n't b'lieve it," said Mr. Tomms, humbly.

"B'lieve it? you 'd ha' been a ninny if yer did. An' she 's a nasty, stingy thing, that Countess. She 's niver giv me a

sixpence nor an old rag neither, sin' here she 's been. A-lyin' a bed an' a-comin' down to breakfast when other folks wants their dinner!"

If such was the state of Nanny's mind as early as the end of August, when this dialogue with Mr. Tomms occurred, you may imagine what it must have been by the beginning of November, and that at that time a very slight spark might any day cause the long-smouldering anger to flame forth in open indignation.

That spark happened to fall the very morning that Mrs. Hackit paid the visit to Mrs. Patten, recorded in the last chapter. Nanny's dislike of the Countess extended to the innocent dog Jet, whom she "could n't a-bear to see made a fuss wi' like a Christian. An' the little ouzel must be washed, too, ivery Saturday, as if there was n't children enoo to wash, wi'out washin' dogs."

Now this particular morning it happened that Milly was quite too poorly to get up, and Mr. Barton observed to Nanny, on going out, that he would call and tell Mr. Brand to come. These circumstances were already enough to make Nanny anxious and susceptible. But the Countess, comfortably ignorant of them, came down as usual about eleven o'clock to her separate breakfast, which stood ready for her at that hour in the parlor; the kettle singing on the hob that she might make her own tea. There was a little jug of cream, taken according to custom from last night's milk, and specially saved for the Countess's breakfast. Jet always awaited his mistress at her bedroom door, and it was her habit to carry him downstairs.

"Now, my little Jet," she said, putting him down gently on the hearth-rug, "you shall have a nice, nice breakfast."

Jet indicated that he thought that observation extremely pertinent and well-timed, by immediately raising himself on his hind-legs, and the Countess emptied the cream-jug into the saucer. Now there was usually a small jug of milk standing on the tray by the side of the cream, and destined for Jet's breakfast, but this morning Nanny, being "moithered," had forgotten that part of the arrangements, so that when the

Countess had made her tea, she perceived there was no second jug, and rang the bell. Nanny appeared, looking very red and heated — the fact was, she had been "doing up" the kitchen fire, and that is a sort of work which by no means conduces to blandness of temper.

"Nanny, you have forgotten Jet's milk; will you bring me some more cream, please?"

This was just a little too much for Nanny's forbearance.

"Yes, I dare say. Here am I wi' my hands full o' the children an' the dinner, and missis ill a-bed, and Mr. Brand a-comin'; and I must run o'er the village to get more cream, 'cause you 've give it to that nasty little blackamoor."

"Is Mrs. Barton ill?"

"Ill — yes — I should think she *is* ill, and much you care. She 's likely to be ill, moithered as *she* is from mornin' to night, wi' folks as had better be elsewhere."

"What do you mean by behaving in this way?"

"Mean? Why I mean as the missis is a-slavin' her life out an' a-sittin' up o' nights, for folks as are better able to wait of *her*, i'stid o' lyin' a-bed an' doin' nothin' all the blessed day, but mek work."

"Leave the room and don't be insolent."

"Insolent! I 'd better be insolent than like what some folks is, — a-livin' on other folks, an' bringin' a bad name on 'em into the bargain."

Here Nanny flung out of the room, leaving the lady to digest this unexpected breakfast at her leisure.

The Countess was stunned for a few minutes, but when she began to recall Nanny's words, there was no possibility of avoiding very unpleasant conclusions from them, or of failing to see her position at the Vicarage in an entirely new light. The interpretation too of Nanny's allusion to a "bad name" did not lie out of the reach of the Countess's imagination, and she saw the necessity of quitting Shepperton without delay. Still, she would like to wait for her brother's letter — no — she would ask Milly to forward it to her — still better, she would go at once to London, inquire her brother's address at his banker's, and go to see him without preliminary.

She went up to Milly's room, and, after kisses and inquiries, said — "I find, on consideration, dear Milly, from the letter I had yesterday, that I must bid you good-by and go up to London at once. But you must not let me leave you ill, you naughty thing."

"Oh, no," said Milly, who felt as if a load had been taken off her back, "I shall be very well in an hour or two. Indeed, I'm much better now. You will want me to help you to pack. But you won't go for two or three days?"

"Yes, I must go to-morrow. But I shall not let you help me to pack, so don't entertain any unreasonable projects, but lie still. Mr. Brand is coming, Nanny says."

The news was not an unpleasant surprise to Mr. Barton when he came home, though he was able to express more regret at the idea of parting than Milly could summon to her lips. He retained more of his original feeling for the Countess than Milly did, for women never betray themselves to men as they do to each other; and the Rev. Amos had not a keen instinct for character. But he felt that he was being relieved from a difficulty, and in the way that was easiest for him. Neither he nor Milly suspected that it was Nanny who had cut the knot for them, for the Countess took care to give no sign on that subject. As for Nanny, she was perfectly aware of the relation between cause and effect in the affair, and secretly chuckled over her outburst of "sauce" as the best morning's work she had ever done.

So, on Friday morning, a fly was seen standing at the Vicarage gate with the Countess's boxes packed upon it; and presently that lady herself was seen getting into the vehicle. After a last shake of the hand to Mr. Barton, and last kisses to Milly and the children, the door was closed; and as the fly rolled off, the little party at the Vicarage gate caught a last glimpse of the handsome Countess leaning and waving kisses from the carriage window. Jet's little black phiz was also seen, and doubtless he had his thoughts and feelings on the occasion, but he kept them strictly within his own bosom.

The schoolmistress opposite witnessed this departure, and lost no time in telling it to the schoolmaster, who again com-

municated the news to the landlord of "The Jolly Colliers," at the close of the morning school-hours. Nanny poured the joyful tidings into the ear of Mr. Farquhar's footman, who happened to call with a letter, and Mr. Brand carried them to all the patients he visited that morning, after calling on Mrs. Barton. So that, before Sunday, it was very generally known in Shepperton parish that the Countess Czerlaski had left the Vicarage.

The Countess had left, but alas, the bills she had contributed to swell still remained; so did the exiguity of the children's clothing, which also was partly an indirect consequence of her presence; and so, too, did the coolness and alienation in the parishioners, which could not at once vanish before the fact of her departure. The Rev. Amos was not exculpated — the past was not expunged. But what was worse than all, Milly's health gave frequent cause for alarm, and the prospect of baby's birth was overshadowed by more than the usual fears. The birth came prematurely, about six weeks after the Countess's departure, but Mr. Brand gave favorable reports to all inquirers on the following day, which was Saturday. On Sunday, after morning service, Mrs. Hackit called at the Vicarage to inquire how Mrs. Barton was, and was invited up-stairs to see her. Milly lay placid and lovely in her feebleness, and held out her hand to Mrs. Hackit with a beaming smile. It was very pleasant to her to see her old friend unreserved and cordial once more. The seven months' baby was very tiny and very red, but "handsome is that handsome does" — he was pronounced to be "doing well," and Mrs. Hackit went home gladdened at heart to think that the perilous hour was over.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE following Wednesday, when Mr. and Mrs. Hackit were seated comfortably by their bright hearth, enjoying the long afternoon afforded by an early dinner, Rachel, the housemaid, came in and said —

"If you please 'm, the shepherd says, have you heard as Mrs. Barton 's wuss, and not expected to live ? "

Mrs. Hackit turned pale, and hurried out to question the shepherd, who, she found, had heard the sad news at an ale-house in the village. Mr. Hackit followed her out and said, "You 'd better have the pony-chaise, and go directly."

"Yes," said Mrs. Hackit, too much overcome to utter any exclamations. "Rachel, come an' help me on wi' my things." When her husband was wrapping her cloak round her feet in the pony-chaise, she said —

"If I don't come home to-night, I shall send back the pony-chaise, and you 'll know I 'm wanted there."

"Yes, yes."

It was a bright frosty day, and by the time Mrs. Hackit arrived at the Vicarage, the sun was near its setting. There was a carriage and pair standing at the gate, which she recognized as Dr. Madeley's, the physician from Rotherby. She entered at the kitchen door that she might avoid knocking, and quietly questioned Nanny. No one was in the kitchen, but, passing on, she saw the sitting-room door open, and Nanny, with Walter in her arms, removing the knives and forks, which had been laid for dinner three hours ago.

"Master says he can't eat no dinner," was Nanny's first word. "He 's never tasted nothin' sin' yesterday mornin', but a cup o' tea."

"When was your missis took worse ? "

"O' Monday night. They sent for Dr. Madeley i' the middle o' the day yisterday, an' he 's here again now."

"Is the baby alive ? "

"No, it died last night. The children 's all at Mrs. Bond's. She come and took 'em away last night, but the master says they must be fetched soon. He 's up-stairs now, wi' Dr. Madeley and Mr. Brand."

At this moment Mrs. Hackit heard the sound of a heavy, slow foot, in the passage; and presently Amos Barton entered, with dry despairing eyes, haggard and unshaven. He expected to find the sitting-room as he left it, with nothing to meet his eyes but Milly's work-basket in the corner of the sofa, and the children's toys overturned in the bow-window. But when he saw Mrs. Hackit come towards him with answering sorrow in her face, the pent-up fountain of tears was opened; he threw himself on the sofa, hid his face, and sobbed aloud.

"Bear up, Mr. Barton," Mrs. Hackit ventured to say at last; "bear up, for the sake o' them dear children."

"The children," said Amos, starting up. "They must be sent for. Some one must fetch them. Milly will want to —"

He could n't finish the sentence, but Mrs. Hackit understood him, and said, "I 'll send the man with the pony-carriage for 'em."

She went out to give the order, and encountered Dr. Madeley and Mr. Brand, who were just going.

Mr. Brand said: "I am very glad to see you are here, Mrs Hackit. No time must be lost in sending for the children. Mrs. Barton wants to see them."

"Do you quite give her up, then?"

"She can hardly live through the night. She begged us to tell her how long she had to live; and then asked for the children."

The pony-carriage was sent; and Mrs. Hackit, returning to Mr. Barton, said she should like to go up-stairs now. He went up-stairs with her and opened the door. The chamber fronted the west; the sun was just setting, and the red light fell full upon the bed, where Milly lay with the hand of death visibly upon her. The feather-bed had been removed, and she lay low on a mattress, with her head slightly raised by pil-

lows. Her long fair neck seemed to be struggling with a painful effort; her features were pallid and pinched, and her eyes were closed. There was no one in the room but the nurse, and the mistress of the free school, who had come to give her help from the beginning of the change.

Amos and Mrs. Hackit stood beside the bed, and Milly opened her eyes.

"My darling, Mrs. Hackit is come to see you."

Milly smiled and looked at her with that strange, far-off look which belongs to ebbing life.

"Are the children coming?" she said, painfully.

"Yes, they will be here directly."

She closed her eyes again.

Presently the pony-carriage was heard; and Amos, motioning to Mrs. Hackit to follow him, left the room. On their way down-stairs, she suggested that the carriage should remain to take them away again afterwards, and Amos assented.

There they stood in the melancholy sitting-room — the five sweet children, from Patty to Chubby — all, with their mother's eyes — all, except Patty, looking up with a vague fear at their father as he entered. Patty understood the great sorrow that was come upon them, and tried to check her sobs as she heard her papa's footsteps.

"My children," said Amos, taking Chubby in his arms, "God is going to take away your dear mamma from us. She wants to see you to say good-by. You must try to be very good and not cry."

He could say no more, but turned round to see if Nanny was there with Walter, and then led the way up-stairs, leading Dickey with the other hand. Mrs. Hackit followed with Sophy and Patty, and then came Nanny with Walter and Fred.

It seemed as if Milly had heard the little footsteps on the stairs, for when Amos entered her eyes were wide open, eagerly looking towards the door. They all stood by the bedside — Amos nearest to her, holding Chubby and Dickey. But she motioned for Patty to come first, and clasping the poor pale child by the hand, said —

"Patty, I'm going away from you. Love your papa. Comfort him; and take care of your little brothers and sisters. God will help you."

Patty stood perfectly quiet, and said, "Yes, mamma."

The mother motioned with her pallid lips for the dear child to lean towards her and kiss her; and then Patty's great anguish overcame her, and she burst into sobs. Amos drew her towards him and pressed her head gently to him, while Milly beckoned Fred and Sophy, and said to them more faintly —

"Patty will try to be your mamma when I am gone, my darlings. You will be good and not vex her."

They leaned towards her, and she stroked their fair heads, and kissed their tear-stained cheeks. They cried because mamma was ill and papa looked so unhappy; but they thought, perhaps next week things would be as they used to be again.

The little ones were lifted on the bed to kiss her. Little Walter said, "Mamma, mamma," and stretched out his fat arms and smiled; and Chubby seemed gravely wondering; but Dickey, who had been looking fixedly at her, with lip hanging down, ever since he came into the room, now seemed suddenly pierced with the idea that mamma was going away somewhere; his little heart swelled, and he cried aloud.

Then Mrs. Hackit and Nanny took them all away. Patty at first begged to stay at home and not go to Mrs. Bond's again; but when Nanny reminded her that she had better go to take care of the younger ones, she submitted at once, and they were all packed in the pony-carriage once more.

Milly kept her eyes shut for some time after the children were gone. Amos had sunk on his knees, and was holding her hand while he watched her face. By-and-by she opened her eyes, and drawing him close to her, whispered slowly —

"My dear — dear — husband — you have been — very — good to me. You — have — made me — very — happy."

She spoke no more for many hours. They watched her breathing becoming more and more difficult, until evening deepened into night, and until midnight was past. About half-past twelve she seemed to be trying to speak, and they leaned to catch her words.

"Music — music — did n't you hear it?"

Amos knelt by the bed and held her hand in his. He did not believe in his sorrow. It was a bad dream. He did not know when she was gone. But Mr. Brand, whom Mrs. Hackit had sent for before twelve o'clock, thinking that Mr. Barton might probably need his help, now came up to him, and said —

"She feels no more pain now. Come, my dear sir, come with me."

"She is n't *dead?*" shrieked the poor desolate man, struggling to shake off Mr. Brand, who had taken him by the arm. But his weary weakened frame was not equal to resistance, and he was dragged out of the room.

CHAPTER IX.

They laid her in the grave — the sweet mother with her baby in her arms — while the Christmas snow lay thick upon the graves. It was Mr. Cleves who buried her. On the first news of Mr. Barton's calamity, he had ridden over from Tripplegate to beg that he might be made of some use, and his silent grasp of Amos's hand had penetrated like the painful thrill of life-recovering warmth to the poor benumbed heart of the stricken man.

The snow lay thick upon the graves, and the day was cold and dreary; but there was many a sad eye watching that black procession as it passed from the Vicarage to the church, and from the church to the open grave. There were men and women standing in that churchyard who had bandied vulgar jests about their pastor, and who had lightly charged him with sin; but now, when they saw him following the coffin, pale and haggard, he was consecrated anew by his great sorrow, and they looked at him with respectful pity.

All the children were there, for Amos had willed it so, thinking that some dim memory of that sacred moment might re

main even with little Walter, and link itself with what he would hear of his sweet mother in after years. He himself led Patty and Dickey; then came Sophy and Fred; Mr. Brand had begged to carry Chubby, and Nanny followed with Walter. They made a circle round the grave while the coffin was being lowered. Patty alone of all the children felt that mamma was in that coffin, and that a new and sadder life had begun for papa and herself. She was pale and trembling, but she clasped his hand more firmly as the coffin went down, and gave no sob. Fred and Sophy, though they were only two and three years younger, and though they had seen mamma in her coffin, seemed to themselves to be looking at some strange show. They had not learned to decipher that terrible handwriting of human destiny, illness and death. Dickey had rebelled against his black clothes, until he was told that it would be naughty to mamma not to put them on, when he at once submitted; and now, though he had heard Nanny say that mamma was in heaven, he had a vague notion that she would come home again to-morrow, and say he had been a good boy and let him empty her work-box. He stood close to his father, with great rosy cheeks, and wide-open blue eyes, looking first up at Mr. Cleves and then down at the coffin, and thinking he and Chubby would play at that when they got home.

The burial was over, and Amos turned with his children to re-enter the house — the house where, an hour ago, Milly's dear body lay, where the windows were half-darkened, and sorrow seemed to have a hallowed precinct for itself, shut out from the world. But now she was gone; the broad snow-reflected daylight was in all the rooms; the Vicarage again seemed part of the common working-day world, and Amos, for the first time, felt that he was alone — that day after day, month after month, year after year, would have to be lived through without Milly's love. Spring would come, and she would not be there; summer, and she would not be there; and he would never have her again with him by the fireside in the long evenings. The seasons all seemed irksome to his thoughts; and how dreary the sunshiny days that would be

sure to come! She was gone from him; and he could never show her his love any more, never make up for omissions in the past by filling future days with tenderness.

Oh the anguish of that thought that we can never atone to our dead for the stinted affection we gave them, for the light answers we returned to their plaints or their pleadings, for the little reverence we showed to that sacred human soul that lived so close to us, and was the divinest thing God had given us to know!

Amos Barton had been an affectionate husband, and while Milly was with him, he was never visited by the thought that perhaps his sympathy with her was not quick and watchful enough; but now he re-lived all their life together, with that terrible keenness of memory and imagination which bereavement gives, and he felt as if his very love needed a pardon for its poverty and selfishness.

No outward solace could counteract the bitterness of this inward woe. But outward solace came. Cold faces looked kind again, and parishioners turned over in their minds what they could best do to help their pastor. Mr. Oldinport wrote to express his sympathy, and enclosed another twenty-pound note, begging that he might be permitted to contribute in this way to the relief of Mr. Barton's mind from pecuniary anxieties, under the pressure of a grief which all his parishioners must share; and offering his interest towards placing the two eldest girls in a school expressly founded for clergymen's daughters. Mr. Cleves succeeded in collecting thirty pounds among his richer clerical brethren, and, adding ten pounds himself, sent the sum to Amos, with the kindest and most delicate words of Christian fellowship and manly friendship. Miss Jackson forgot old grievances, and came to stay some months with Milly's children, bringing such material aid as she could spare from her small income. These were substantial helps, which relieved Amos from the pressure of his money difficulties; and the friendly attentions, the kind pressure of the hand, the cordial looks he met with everywhere in his parish, made him feel that the fatal frost which had settled on his pastoral duties, during the Countess's residence at the

Vicarage, was completely thawed, and that the hearts of his parishioners were once more open to him.

No one breathed the Countess's name now; for Milly's memory hallowed her husband, as of old the place was hallowed on which an angel from God had alighted.

When the spring came, Mrs. Hackit begged that she might have Dickey to stay with her, and great was the enlargement of Dickey's experience from that visit. Every morning he was allowed — being well wrapt up as to his chest by Mrs. Hackit's own hands, but very bare and red as to his legs — to run loose in the cow and poultry yard, to persecute the turkey-cock by satirical imitations of his gobble-gobble, and to put difficult questions to the groom as to the reasons why horses had four legs, and other transcendental matters. Then Mr. Hackit would take Dickey up on horseback when he rode round his farm, and Mrs. Hackit had a large plum-cake in cut, ready to meet incidental attacks of hunger. So that Dickey had considerably modified his views as to the desirability of Mrs. Hackit's kisses.

The Misses Farquhar made particular pets of Fred and Sophy, to whom they undertook to give lessons twice a-week in writing and geography; and Mrs. Farquhar devised many treats for the little ones. Patty's treat was to stay at home, or walk about with her papa; and when he sat by the fire in an evening, after the other children were gone to bed, she would bring a stool, and, placing it against his feet, would sit down upon it and lean her head against his knee. Then his hand would rest on that fair head, and he would feel that Milly's love was not quite gone out of his life.

So the time wore on till it was May again, and the church was quite finished and reopened in all its new splendor, and Mr. Barton was devoting himself with more vigor than ever to his parochial duties. But one morning — it was a very bright morning, and evil tidings sometimes like to fly in the finest weather — there came a letter for Mr. Barton, addressed in the Vicar's handwriting. Amos opened it with some anxiety — somehow or other he had a presentiment of evil. The letter contained the announcement that Mr. Carpe had resolved on

coming to reside at Shepperton, and that, consequently, in six months from that time Mr. Barton's duties as curate in that parish would be closed.

Oh, it was hard! Just when Shepperton had become the place where he most wished to stay — where he had friends who knew his sorrows — where he lived close to Milly's grave. To part from that grave seemed like parting with Milly a second time; for Amos was one who clung to all the material links between his mind and the past. His imagination was not vivid, and required the stimulus of actual perception.

It roused some bitter feeling, too, to think that Mr. Carpe's wish to reside at Shepperton was merely a pretext for removing Mr. Barton, in order that he might ultimately give the curacy of Shepperton to his own brother-in-law, who was known to be wanting a new position.

Still, it must be borne; and the painful business of seeking another curacy must be set about without loss of time. After the lapse of some months, Amos was obliged to renounce the hope of getting one at all near Shepperton, and he at length resigned himself to accepting one in a distant county. The parish was in a large manufacturing town, where his walks would lie among noisy streets and dingy alleys, and where the children would have no garden to play in, no pleasant farmhouses to visit.

It was another blow inflicted on the bruised man.

CHAPTER X.

At length the dreaded week was come, when Amos and his children must leave Shepperton. There was general regret among the parishioners at his departure: not that any one of them thought his spiritual gifts pre-eminent, or was conscious of great edification from his ministry. But his recent troubles

had called out their better sympathies, and that is always a source of love. Amos failed to touch the spring of goodness by his sermons, but he touched it effectually by his sorrows; and there was now a real bond between him and his flock.

"My heart aches for them poor motherless children," said Mrs. Hackit to her husband, "a-going among strangers, and into a nasty town, where there 's no good victuals to be had, and you must pay dear to get bad uns."

Mrs. Hackit had a vague notion of a town life as a combination of dirty backyards, measly pork, and dingy linen.

The same sort of sympathy was strong among the poorer class of parishioners. Old stiff-jointed Mr. Tozer, who was still able to earn a little by gardening "jobs," stopped Mrs. Cramp, the charwoman, on her way home from the Vicarage, where she had been helping Nanny to pack up the day before the departure, and inquired very particularly into Mr. Barton's prospects.

"Ah, poor mon," he was heard to say, "I 'm sorry for un. He hed n't much here, but he 'll be wuss off theer. Half a loaf 's better nor ne'er un."

The sad good-byes had all been said before that last evening; and after all the packing was done and all the arrangements were made, Amos felt the oppression of that blank interval in which one has nothing left to think of but the dreary future — the separation from the loved and familiar, and the chilling entrance on the new and strange. In every parting there is an image of death.

Soon after ten o'clock, when he had sent Nanny to bed, that she might have a good night's rest before the fatigues of the morrow, he stole softly out to pay a last visit to Milly's grave. It was a moonless night, but the sky was thick with stars, and their light was enough to show that the grass had grown long on the grave, and that there was a tombstone telling in bright letters, on a dark ground, that beneath were deposited the remains of Amelia, the beloved wife of Amos Barton, who died in the thirty-fifth year of her age, leaving a husband and six children to lament her loss. The final words of the inscription were, "Thy will be done."

The husband was now advancing towards the dear mound from which he was so soon to be parted, perhaps forever. He stood a few minutes reading over and over again the words on the tombstone, as if to assure himself that all the happy and unhappy past was a reality. For love is frightened at the intervals of insensibility and callousness that encroach by little and little on the dominion of grief, and it makes efforts to recall the keenness of the first anguish.

Gradually, as his eye dwelt on the words, "Amelia, the beloved wife," the waves of feeling swelled within his soul, and he threw himself on the grave, clasping it with his arms, and kissing the cold turf.

"Milly, Milly, dost thou hear me? I did n't love thee enough — I was n't tender enough to thee — but I think of it all now."

The sobs came and choked his utterance, and the warm tears fell.

CONCLUSION.

Only once again in his life has Amos Barton visited Milly's grave. It was in the calm and softened light of an autumnal afternoon, and he was not alone. He held on his arm a young woman, with a sweet, grave face, which strongly recalled the expression of Mrs. Barton's, but was less lovely in form and color. She was about thirty, but there were some premature lines round her mouth and eyes, which told of early anxiety.

Amos himself was much changed. His thin circlet of hair was nearly white, and his walk was no longer firm and upright. But his glance was calm, and even cheerful, and his neat linen told of a woman's care. Milly did not take all her love from the earth when she died. She had left some of it in Patty's heart.

All the other children were now grown up, and had gone their several ways. Dickey, you will be glad to hear, had

shown remarkable talents as an engineer. His cheeks are still ruddy, in spite of mixed mathematics, and his eyes are still large and blue; but in other respects his person would present no marks of identification for his friend Mrs. Hackit, if she were to see him; especially now that her eyes must be grown very dim, with the wear of more than twenty additional years. He is nearly six feet high, and has a proportionately broad chest; he wears spectacles, and rubs his large white hands through a mass of shaggy brown hair. But I am sure you have no doubt that Mr. Richard Barton is a thoroughly good fellow, as well as a man of talent, and you will be glad any day to shake hands with him, for his own sake as well as his mother's.

Patty alone remains by her father's side, and makes the evening sunshine of his life.

SCENES OF CLERICAL LIFE.

MR. GILFIL'S LOVE-STORY.

MR. GILFIL'S LOVE-STORY.

CHAPTER I.

When old Mr. Gilfil died, thirty years ago, there was general sorrow in Shepperton; and if black cloth had not been hung round the pulpit and reading-desk, by order of his nephew and principal legatee, the parishioners would certainly have subscribed the necessary sum out of their own pockets, rather than allow such a tribute of respect to be wanting. All the farmers' wives brought out their black bombazines; and Mrs. Jennings, at the Wharf, by appearing the first Sunday after Mr. Gilfil's death in her salmon-colored ribbons and green shawl, excited the severest remark. To be sure, Mrs. Jennings was a new-comer, and town-bred, so that she could hardly be expected to have very clear notions of what was proper; but as Mrs. Higgins observed in an undertone to Mrs. Parrot when they were coming out of church, "Her husband, who 'd been born i' the parish, might ha' told her better." And unreadiness to put on black on all available occasions, or too great an alacrity in putting it off, argued, in Mrs. Higgins's opinion, a dangerous levity of character, and an unnatural insensibility to the essential fitness of things.

"Some folks can't a-bear to put off their colors," she remarked; "but that was never the way i' *my* family. Why, Mrs. Parrot, from the time I was married, till Mr. Higgins died, nine years ago come Candlemas, I niver was out o' black two year together!"

"Ah," said Mrs. Parrot, who was conscious of inferiority in this respect, "there is n't many families as have had so many deaths as yours, Mrs. Higgins."

Mrs. Higgins, who was an elderly widow, "well left," reflected with complacency that Mrs. Parrot's observation was no more than just, and that Mrs. Jennings very likely belonged to a family which had had no funerals to speak of.

Even dirty Dame Fripp, who was a very rare church-goer, had been to Mrs. Hackit to beg a bit of old crape, and with this sign of grief pinned on her little coal-scuttle bonnet, was seen dropping her curtsy opposite the reading-desk. This manifestation of respect towards Mr. Gilfil's memory on the part of Dame Fripp had no theological bearing whatever. It was due to an event which had occurred some years back, and which, I am sorry to say, had left that grimy old lady as indifferent to the means of grace as ever. Dame Fripp kept leeches, and was understood to have such remarkable influence over those wilful animals in inducing them to bite under the most unpromising circumstances, that though her own leeches were usually rejected, from a suspicion that they had lost their appetite, she herself was constantly called in to apply the more lively individuals furnished from Mr. Pilgrim's surgery, when, as was very often the case, one of that clever man's paying patients was attacked with inflammation. Thus Dame Fripp, in addition to "property" supposed to yield her no less than half-a-crown a-week, was in the receipt of professional fees, the gross amount of which was vaguely estimated by her neighbors as "pouns an' pouns." Moreover, she drove a brisk trade in lollipop with epicurean urchins, who recklessly purchased that luxury at the rate of two hundred per cent. Nevertheless, with all these notorious sources of income, the shameless old woman constantly pleaded poverty, and begged for scraps at Mrs. Hackit's, who, though she always said Mrs. Fripp was "as false as two folks," and no better than a miser and a heathen, had yet a leaning towards her as an old neighbor.

"There 's that case-hardened old Judy a-coming after the tea-leaves again," Mrs. Hackit would say; "an' I 'm fool

enough to give 'em her, though Sally wants 'em all the while to sweep the floors with!"

Such was Dame Fripp, whom Mr. Gilfil, riding leisurely in top-boots and spurs from doing duty at Knebley one warm Sunday afternoon, observed sitting in the dry ditch near her cottage, and by her side a large pig, who, with that ease and confidence belonging to perfect friendship, was lying with his head in her lap, and making no effort to play the agreeable beyond an occasional grunt.

"Why, Mrs. Fripp," said the Vicar, "I didn't know you had such a fine pig. You 'll have some rare flitches at Christmas!"

"Eh, God forbid! My son gev him me two 'ear ago, an' he 's been company to me iver sin'. I could n't find i' my heart to part wi'm, if I niver knowed the taste o' bacon-fat again."

"Why, he 'll eat his head off, and yours too. How can you go on keeping a pig, and making nothing by him?"

"Oh, he picks a bit hisself wi' rootin', and I dooant mind doing wi'out to gi' him summat. A bit o' coompany 's meat an' drink too, an' he follers me about, and grunts when I spake to 'm, just like a Christian."

Mr. Gilfil laughed, and I am obliged to admit that he said good-by to Dame Fripp without asking her why she had not been to church, or making the slightest effort for her spiritual edification. But the next day he ordered his man David to take her a great piece of bacon, with a message, saying, the parson wanted to make sure that Mrs. Fripp would know the taste of bacon-fat again. So, when Mr. Gilfil died, Dame Fripp manifested her gratitude and reverence in the simple dingy fashion I have mentioned.

You already suspect that the Vicar did not shine in the more spiritual functions of his office; and indeed, the utmost I can say for him in this respect is, that he performed those functions with undeviating attention to brevity and despatch. He had a large heap of short sermons, rather yellow and worn at the edges, from which he took two every Sunday, securing perfect impartiality in the selection by taking them as they came, without reference to topics; and having preached one

of these sermons at Shepperton in the morning, he mounted his horse and rode hastily with the other in his pocket to Knebley, where he officiated in a wonderful little church, with a checkered pavement which had once rung to the iron tread of military monks, with coats of arms in clusters on the lofty roof, marble warriors and their wives without noses occupying a large proportion of the area, and the twelve apostles, with their heads very much on one side, holding didactic ribbons, painted in fresco on the walls. Here, in an absence of mind to which he was prone, Mr. Gilfil would sometimes forget to take off his spurs before putting on his surplice, and only become aware of the omission by feeling something mysteriously tugging at the skirts of that garment as he stepped into the reading-desk. But the Knebley farmers would as soon have thought of criticising the moon as their pastor. He belonged to the course of nature, like markets and toll-gates and dirty bank-notes; and being a vicar, his claim on their veneration had never been counteracted by an exasperating claim on their pockets. Some of them, who did not indulge in the superfluity of a covered cart without springs, had dined half an hour earlier than usual — that is to say, at twelve o'clock — in order to have time for their long walk through miry lanes, and present themselves duly in their places at two o'clock, when Mr. Oldinport and Lady Felicia, to whom Knebley Church was a sort of family temple, made their way among the bows and curtsies of their dependants to a carved and canopied pew in the chancel, diffusing as they went a delicate odor of Indian roses on the unsusceptible nostrils of the congregation.

The farmers' wives and children sate on the dark oaken benches, but the husbands usually chose the distinctive dignity of a stall under one of the twelve apostles, where, when the alternation of prayers and responses had given place to the agreeable monotony of the sermon, Paterfamilias might be seen or heard sinking into a pleasant doze, from which he infallibly woke up at the sound of the concluding doxology. And then they made their way back again through the miry lanes, perhaps almost as much the better for this simple

weekly tribute to what they knew of good and right, as many a more wakeful and critical congregation of the present day.

Mr. Gilfil, too, used to make his way home in the later years of his life, for he had given up the habit of dining at Knebley Abbey on a Sunday, having, I am sorry to say, had a very bitter quarrel with Mr. Oldinport, the cousin and predecessor of the Mr. Oldinport who flourished in the Rev. Amos Barton's time. That quarrel was a sad pity, for the two had had many a good day's hunting together when they were younger, and in those friendly times not a few members of the hunt envied Mr. Oldinport the excellent terms he was on with his vicar; for, as Sir Jasper Sitwell observed, "next to a man's wife, there 's nobody can be such an infernal plague to you as a parson, always under your nose on your own estate."

I fancy the original difference which led to the rupture was very slight; but Mr. Gilfil was of an extremely caustic turn, his satire having a flavor of originality which was quite wanting in his sermons; and as Mr. Oldinport's armor of conscious virtue presented some considerable and conspicuous gaps, the Vicar's keen-edged retorts probably made a few incisions too deep to be forgiven. Such, at least, was the view of the case presented by Mr. Hackit, who knew as much of the matter as any third person. For, the very week after the quarrel, when presiding at the annual dinner of the Association for the Prosecution of Felons, held at the Oldinport Arms, he contributed an additional zest to the conviviality on that occasion by informing the company that "the parson had given the Squire a lick with the rough side of his tongue." The detection of the person or persons who had driven off Mr. Parrot's heifer, could hardly have been more welcome news to the Shepperton tenantry, with whom Mr. Oldinport was in the worst odor as a landlord, having kept up his rents in spite of falling prices, and not being in the least stung to emulation by paragraphs in the provincial newspapers, stating that the Honorable Augustus Purwell, or Viscount Blethers, had made a return of ten per cent on their last rent-day. The fact was, Mr. Oldinport had not the slightest intention of standing for Parliament, whereas he had the strongest inten-

tion of adding to his unentailed estate. Hence, to the Shepperton farmers it was as good as lemon with their grog to know that the Vicar had thrown out sarcasms against the Squire's charities, as little better than those of the man who stole a goose, and gave away the giblets in alms. For Shepperton, you observe, was in a state of Attic culture compared with Knebley; it had turnpike roads and a public opinion, whereas, in the Bœotian Knebley, men's minds and wagons alike moved in the deepest of ruts, and the landlord was only grumbled at as a necessary and unalterable evil, like the weather, the weevils, and the turnip-fly.

Thus in Shepperton this breach with Mr. Oldinport tended only to heighten that good understanding which the Vicar had always enjoyed with the rest of his parishioners, from the generation whose children he had christened a quarter of a century before, down to that hopeful generation represented by little Tommy Bond, who had recently quitted frocks and trousers for the severe simplicity of a tight suit of corduroys, relieved by numerous brass buttons. Tommy was a saucy boy, impervious to all impressions of reverence, and excessively addicted to humming-tops and marbles, with which recreative resources he was in the habit of immoderately distending the pockets of his corduroys. One day, spinning his top on the garden-walk, and seeing the Vicar advance directly towards it, at that exciting moment when it was beginning to "sleep" magnificently, he shouted out with all the force of his lungs — "Stop! don't knock my top down, now!" From that day "little Corduroys" had been an especial favorite with Mr. Gilfil, who delighted to provoke his ready scorn and wonder by putting questions which gave Tommy the meanest opinion of his intellect.

"Well, little Corduroys, have they milked the geese to-day?"

"Milked the geese! why, they don't milk the geese, you silly!"

"No! dear heart! why, how do the goslings live, then?"

The nutriment of goslings rather transcending Tommy's observations in natural history, he feigned to understand this

question in an exclamatory rather than an interrogatory sense, and became absorbed in winding up his top.

"Ah, I see you don't know how the goslings live! But did you notice how it rained sugar-plums yesterday?" (Here Tommy became attentive.) "Why, they fell into my pocket as I rode along. You look in my pocket and see if they did n't."

Tommy, without waiting to discuss the alleged antecedent, lost no time in ascertaining the presence of the agreeable consequent, for he had a well-founded belief in the advantages of diving into the Vicar's pocket. Mr. Gilfil called it his wonderful pocket, because, as he delighted to tell the "young shavers" and "two-shoes" — so he called all little boys and girls — whenever he put pennies into it, they turned into sugar-plums or gingerbread, or some other nice thing. Indeed, little Bessie Parrot, a flaxen-headed "two-shoes," very white and fat as to her neck, always had the admirable directness and sincerity to salute him with the question — "What zoo dot in zoo pottet?"

You can imagine, then, that the christening dinners were none the less merry for the presence of the parson. The farmers relished his society particularly, for he could not only smoke his pipe, and season the details of parish affairs with abundance of caustic jokes and proverbs, but, as Mr. Bond often said, no man knew more than the Vicar about the breed of cows and horses. He had grazing-land of his own about five miles off, which a bailiff, ostensibly a tenant, farmed under his direction; and to ride backwards and forwards, and look after the buying and selling of stock, was the old gentleman's chief relaxation, now his hunting-days were over. To hear him discussing the respective merits of the Devonshire breed and the short-horns, or the last foolish decision of the magistrates about a pauper, a superficial observer might have seen little difference, beyond his superior shrewdness, between the Vicar and his bucolic parishioners; for it was his habit to approximate his accent and mode of speech to theirs, doubtless because he thought it a mere frustration of the purposes of language to talk of "shear-hogs" and "ewes" to men who

habitually said "sharrags" and "yowes." Nevertheless the farmers themselves were perfectly aware of the distinction between them and the parson, and had not at all the less belief in him as a gentleman and a clergyman for his easy speech and familiar manners. Mrs. Parrot smoothed her apron and set her cap right with the utmost solicitude when she saw the Vicar coming, made him her deepest curtsy, and every Christmas had a fat turkey ready to send him with her "duty." And in the most gossiping colloquies with Mr. Gilfil, you might have observed that both men and women "minded their words," and never became indifferent to his approbation.

The same respect attended him in his strictly clerical functions. The benefits of baptism were supposed to be somehow bound up with Mr. Gilfil's personality, so metaphysical a distinction as that between a man and his office being, as yet, quite foreign to the mind of a good Shepperton Churchman, savoring, he would have thought, of Dissent on the very face of it. Miss Selina Parrot put off her marriage a whole month when Mr. Gilfil had an attack of rheumatism, rather than be married in a makeshift manner by the Milby curate.

"We 've had a very good sermon this morning," was the frequent remark, after hearing one of the old yellow series, heard with all the more satisfaction because it had been heard for the twentieth time; for to minds on the Shepperton level it is repetition, not novelty, that produces the strongest effect; and phrases, like tunes, are a long time making themselves at home in the brain.

Mr. Gilfil's sermons, as you may imagine, were not of a highly doctrinal, still less of a polemical, cast. They perhaps did not search the conscience very powerfully; for you remember that to Mrs. Patten, who had listened to them thirty years, the announcement that she was a sinner appeared an uncivil heresy; but, on the other hand, they made no unreasonable demand on the Shepperton intellect — amounting, indeed, to little more than an expansion of the concise thesis, that those who do wrong will find it the worse for them, and those who do well will find it the better for them; the nature of wrong-doing being exposed in special sermons against lying, back-

biting, anger, slothfulness, and the like; and well-doing being interpreted as honesty, truthfulness, charity, industry, and other common virtues, lying quite on the surface of life, and having very little to do with deep spiritual doctrine. Mrs. Patten understood that if she turned out ill-crushed cheeses, a just retribution awaited her; though, I fear, she made no particular application of the sermon on backbiting. Mrs. Hackit expressed herself greatly edified by the sermon on honesty, the allusion to the unjust weight and deceitful balance having a peculiar lucidity for her, owing to a recent dispute with her grocer; but I am not aware that she ever appeared to be much struck by the sermon on anger.

As to any suspicion that Mr. Gilfil did not dispense the pure Gospel, or any strictures on his doctrine and mode of delivery, such thoughts never visited the minds of the Shepperton parishioners — of those very parishioners who, ten or fifteen years later, showed themselves extremely critical of Mr. Barton's discourses and demeanor. But in the interim they had tasted that dangerous fruit of the tree of knowledge — innovation, which is well known to open the eyes, even in an uncomfortable manner. At present, to find fault with the sermon was regarded as almost equivalent to finding fault with religion itself. One Sunday, Mr. Hackit's nephew, Master Tom Stokes, a flippant town youth, greatly scandalized his excellent relatives by declaring that he could write as good a sermon as Mr. Gilfil's; whereupon Mr. Hackit sought to reduce the presumptuous youth to utter confusion, by offering him a sovereign if he would fulfil his vaunt. The sermon was written, however; and though it was not admitted to be anywhere within reach of Mr. Gilfil's, it was yet so astonishingly like a sermon, having a text, three divisions, and a concluding exhortation beginning "And now, my brethren," that the sovereign, though denied formally, was bestowed informally, and the sermon was pronounced, when Master Stokes's back was turned, to be "an uncommon cliver thing."

The Rev. Mr. Pickard, indeed, of the Independent Meeting, had stated, in a sermon preached at Rotherby, for the reduc-

tion of a debt on New Zion, built, with an exuberance of faith and a deficiency of funds, by seceders from the original Zion, that he lived in a parish where the Vicar was very "dark;" and in the prayers he addressed to his own congregation, he was in the habit of comprehensively alluding to the parishioners outside the chapel walls, as those who, Gallio-like, "cared for none of these things." But I need hardly say that no church-goer ever came within earshot of Mr. Pickard.

It was not to the Shepperton farmers only that Mr. Gilfil's society was acceptable; he was a welcome guest at some of the best houses in that part of the country. Old Sir Jasper Sitwell would have been glad to see him every week; and if you had seen him conducting Lady Sitwell in to dinner, or had heard him talking to her with quaint yet graceful gallantry, you would have inferred that the earlier period of his life had been passed in more stately society than could be found in Shepperton, and that his slipshod chat and homely manners were but like weather-stains on a fine old block of marble, allowing you still to see here and there the fineness of the grain, and the delicacy of the original tint. But in his later years these visits became a little too troublesome to the old gentleman, and he was rarely to be found anywhere of an evening beyond the bounds of his own parish — most frequently, indeed, by the side of his own sitting-room fire, smoking his pipe, and maintaining the pleasing antithesis of dryness and moisture by an occasional sip of gin-and-water.

Here I am aware that I have run the risk of alienating all my refined lady-readers, and utterly annihilating any curiosity they may have felt to know the details of Mr. Gilfil's love-story. "Gin-and-water! foh! you may as well ask us to interest ourselves in the romance of a tallow-chandler, who mingles the image of his beloved with short dips and moulds."

But in the first place, dear ladies, allow me to plead that gin-and-water, like obesity, or baldness, or the gout, does not exclude a vast amount of antecedent romance, any more than the neatly executed "fronts" which you may some day wear, will exclude your present possession of less expensive braids. Alas, alas! we poor mortals are often little better than wood-

ashes — there is small sign of the sap, and the leafy freshness, and the bursting buds that were once there; but wherever we see wood-ashes, we know that all that early fulness of life must have been. I, at least, hardly ever look at a bent old man, or a wizened old woman, but I see also, with my mind's eye, that Past of which they are the shrunken remnant, and the unfinished romance of rosy cheeks and bright eyes seems sometimes of feeble interest and significance, compared with that drama of hope and love which has long ago reached its catastrophe, and left the poor soul, like a dim and dusty stage, with all its sweet garden-scenes and fair perspectives overturned and thrust out of sight.

In the second place, let me assure you that Mr. Gilfil's potations of gin-and-water were quite moderate. His nose was not rubicund; on the contrary, his white hair hung around a pale and venerable face. He drank it chiefly, I believe, because it was cheap; and here I find myself alighting on another of the Vicar's weaknesses, which, if I had cared to paint a flattering portrait rather than a faithful one, I might have chosen to suppress. It is undeniable that, as the years advanced, Mr. Gilfil became, as Mr. Hackit observed, more and more "close-fisted," though the growing propensity showed itself rather in the parsimony of his personal habits, than in withholding help from the needy. He was saving — so he represented the matter to himself — for a nephew, the only son of a sister who had been the dearest object, all but one, in his life. "The lad," he thought, "will have a nice little fortune to begin life with, and will bring his pretty young wife some day to see the spot where his old uncle lies. It will perhaps be all the better for *his* hearth that mine was lonely."

Mr. Gilfil was a bachelor, then?

That is the conclusion to which you would probably have come if you had entered his sitting-room, where the bare tables, the large old-fashioned horse-hair chairs, and the threadbare Turkey carpet perpetually fumigated with tobacco, seemed to tell a story of wifeless existence that was contradicted by no portrait, no piece of embroidery, no faded bit of pretty

triviality, hinting of taper-fingers and small feminine ambitions. And it was here that Mr. Gilfil passed his evenings, seldom with other society than that of Ponto, his old brown setter, who, stretched out at full length on the rug with his nose between his fore-paws, would wrinkle his brows and lift up his eyelids every now and then, to exchange a glance of mutual understanding with his master. But there was a chamber in Shepperton Vicarage which told a different story from that bare and cheerless dining-room — a chamber never entered by any one besides Mr. Gilfil and old Martha the housekeeper, who, with David her husband as groom and gardener, formed the Vicar's entire establishment. The blinds of this chamber were always down, except once a-quarter, when Martha entered that she might air and clean it. She always asked Mr. Gilfil for the key, which he kept locked up in his bureau, and returned it to him when she had finished her task.

It was a touching sight that the daylight streamed in upon, as Martha drew aside the blinds and thick curtains, and opened the Gothic casement of the oriel window! On the little dressing-table there was a dainty looking-glass in a carved and gilt frame; bits of wax-candle were still in the branched sockets at the sides, and on one of these branches hung a little black lace kerchief; a faded satin pincushion, with the pins rusted in it, a scent-bottle, and a large green fan, lay on the table; and on a dressing-box by the side of the glass was a work-basket, and an unfinished baby-cap, yellow with age, lying in it. Two gowns, of a fashion long forgotten, were hanging on nails against the door, and a pair of tiny red slippers, with a bit of tarnished silver embroidery on them, were standing at the foot of the bed. Two or three water-color drawings, views of Naples, hung upon the walls; and over the mantel-piece, above some bits of rare old china, two miniatures in oval frames. One of these miniatures represented a young man about seven-and-twenty, with a sanguine complexion, full lips, and clear candid gray eyes. The other was the likeness of a girl probably not more than eighteen, with small features, thin cheeks, a pale southern-looking complexion, and large dark eyes. The gentleman wore powder; the lady had her dark

hair gathered away from her face, and a little cap, with a cherry-colored bow, set on the top of her head — a coquettish head-dress, but the eyes spoke of sadness rather than of coquetry.

Such were the things that Martha had dusted and let the air upon, four times a-year, ever since she was a blooming lass of twenty; and she was now, in this last decade of Mr. Gilfil's life, unquestionably on the wrong side of fifty. Such was the locked-up chamber in Mr. Gilfil's house: a sort of visible symbol of the secret chamber in his heart, where he had long turned the key on early hopes and early sorrows, shutting up forever all the passion and the poetry of his life.

There were not many people in the parish, besides Martha, who had any very distinct remembrance of Mr. Gilfil's wife, or indeed who knew anything of her, beyond the fact that there was a marble tablet, with a Latin inscription in memory of her, over the vicarage pew. The parishioners who were old enough to remember her arrival were not generally gifted with descriptive powers, and the utmost you could gather from them was, that Mrs. Gilfil looked like a "furriner, wi' such eyes, you can't think, an' a voice as went through you when she sung at church." The one exception was Mrs. Patten, whose strong memory and taste for personal narrative made her a great source of oral tradition in Shepperton. Mr. Hackit, who had not come into the parish until ten years after Mrs. Gilfil's death, would often put old questions to Mrs. Patten for the sake of getting the old answers, which pleased him in the same way as passages from a favorite book, or the scenes of a familiar play, please more accomplished people.

"Ah, you remember well the Sunday as Mrs. Gilfil first come to church, eh, Mrs. Patten?"

"To be sure I do. It was a fine bright Sunday as ever was seen, just at the beginnin' o' hay harvest. Mr. Tarbett preached that day, and Mr. Gilfil sat i' the pew with his wife. I think I see him now, a-leading her up the aisle, an' her head not reachin' much above his elber: a little pale woman, with eyes as black as sloes, an' yet lookin' blank-like, as if she see'd nothing with 'em."

"I warrant she had her weddin' clothes on?" said Mr. Hackit.

"Nothin' partickler smart — on'y a white hat tied down under her chin, an' a white Indy muslin gown. But you don't know what Mr. Gilfil was in those times. He was fine an' altered before you come into the parish. He 'd a fresh color then, an' a bright look wi' his eyes, as did your heart good to see. He looked rare and happy that Sunday; but somehow, I 'd a feelin' as it would n't last long. I 've no opinion o' furriners, Mr. Hackit, for I 've travelled i' their country with my lady in my time, an' seen enough o' their victuals an' their nasty ways."

"Mrs. Gilfil come from It'ly, did n't she?"

"I reckon she did, but I niver could rightly hear about that. Mr. Gilfil was niver to be spoke to about her, and nobody else hereabout knowed anythin'. Howiver, she must ha' come over pretty young, for she spoke English as well as you an' me. It 's them Italians as has such fine voices, an' Mrs. Gilfil sung, you never heared the like. He brought her here to have tea with me one afternoon, and says he, in his jovial way, 'Now, Mrs. Patten, I want Mrs. Gilfil to see the neatest house, and drink the best cup o' tea, in all Shepperton; you must show her your dairy and your cheese-room, and then she shall sing you a song.' An' so she did; an' her voice seemed sometimes to fill the room; an' then it went low an' soft as if it was whisperin' close to your heart like."

"You never heared her again, I reckon?"

"No: she was sickly then, and she died in a few months after. She was n't in the parish much more nor half a year altogether. She did n't seem lively that afternoon, an' I could see she did n't care about the dairy, nor the cheeses, on'y she pretended, to please him. As for him, I niver see'd a man so wrapt up in a woman. He looked at her as if he was worshippin' her, an' as if he wanted to lift her off the ground ivery minute, to save her the trouble o' walkin'. Poor man, poor man! It had like to ha' killed him when she died, though he niver gev way, but went on ridin' about and preachin'. But he was wore to a shadow, an' his eyes used to look as dead — you would n't ha' knowed 'em."

"She brought him no fortin?"

"Not she. All Mr. Gilfil's property come by his mother's side. There was blood an' money too, there. It 's a thousand pities as he married i' that way — a fine man like him, as might ha' had the pick o' the county, an' had his grandchildren about him now. An' him so fond o' children, too."

In this manner Mrs. Patten usually wound up her reminiscences of the Vicar's wife, of whom, you perceive, she knew but little. It was clear that the communicative old lady had nothing to tell of Mrs. Gilfil's history previous to her arrival in Shepperton, and that she was unacquainted with Mr. Gilfil's love-story.

But I, dear reader, am quite as communicative as Mrs. Patten, and much better informed; so that, if you care to know more about the Vicar's courtship and marriage, you need only carry your imagination back to the latter end of the last century, and your attention forward into the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

It is the evening of the 21st of June, 1788. The day has been bright and sultry, and the sun will still be more than an hour above the horizon, but his rays, broken by the leafy fretwork of the elms that border the park, no longer prevent two ladies from carrying out their cushions and embroidery, and seating themselves to work on the lawn in front of Cheverel Manor. The soft turf gives way even under the fairy tread of the younger lady, whose small stature and slim figure rest on the tiniest of full-grown feet. She trips along before the elder, carrying the cushions, which she places in the favorite spot, just on the slope by a clump of laurels, where they can see the sunbeams sparkling among the water-lilies, and can be themselves seen from the dining-room windows. She has

deposited the cushions, and now turns round, so that you may have a full view of her as she stands waiting the slower advance of the elder lady. You are at once arrested by her large dark eyes, which, in their inexpressive unconscious beauty, resemble the eyes of a fawn, and it is only by an effort of attention that you notice the absence of bloom on her young cheek, and the southern yellowish tint of her small neck and face, rising above the little black lace kerchief which prevents the too immediate comparison of her skin with her white muslin gown. Her large eyes seem all the more striking because the dark hair is gathered away from her face, under a little cap set at the top of her head, with a cherry-colored bow on one side.

The elder lady, who is advancing towards the cushions, is cast in a very different mould of womanhood. She is tall, and looks the taller because her powdered hair is turned backward over a toupee, and surmounted by lace and ribbons. She is nearly fifty, but her complexion is still fresh and beautiful, with the beauty of an auburn blond; her proud pouting lips, and her head thrown a little backward as she walks, give an expression of hauteur which is not contradicted by the cold gray eye. The tucked-in kerchief, rising full over the low tight bodice of her blue dress, sets off the majestic form of her bust, and she treads the lawn as if she were one of Sir Joshua Reynolds's stately ladies, who had suddenly stepped from her frame to enjoy the evening cool.

"Put the cushions lower, Caterina, that we may not have so much sun upon us," she called out, in a tone of authority, when still at some distance.

Caterina obeyed, and they sat down, making two bright patches of red and white and blue on the green background of the laurels and the lawn, which would look none the less pretty in a picture because one of the women's hearts was rather cold and the other rather sad.

And a charming picture Cheverel Manor would have made that evening, if some English Watteau had been there to paint it: the castellated house of gray-tinted stone, with the flickering sunbeams sending dashes of golden light across

the many-shaped panes in the mullioned windows, and a great beech leaning athwart one of the flanking towers, and breaking, with its dark flattened boughs, the too formal symmetry of the front; the broad gravel-walk winding on the right, by a row of tall pines, alongside the pool — on the left branching out among swelling grassy mounds, surmounted by clumps of trees, where the red trunk of the Scotch fir glows in the descending sunlight against the bright green of limes and acacias; the great pool, where a pair of swans are swimming lazily with one leg tucked under a wing, and where the open water-lilies lie calmly accepting the kisses of the fluttering light-sparkles; the lawn, with its smooth emerald greenness, sloping down to the rougher and browner herbage of the park, from which it is invisibly fenced by a little stream that winds away from the pool, and disappears under a wooden bridge in the distant pleasure-ground; and on this lawn our two ladies, whose part in the landscape the painter, standing at a favorable point of view in the park, would represent with a few little dabs of red and white and blue.

Seen from the great Gothic windows of the dining-room, they had much more definiteness of outline, and were distinctly visible to the three gentlemen sipping their claret there, as two fair women in whom all three had a personal interest. These gentlemen were a group worth considering attentively; but any one entering that dining-room for the first time, would perhaps have had his attention even more strongly arrested by the room itself, which was so bare of furniture that it impressed one with its architectural beauty like a cathedral. A piece of matting stretched from door to door, a bit of worn carpet under the dining-table, and a sideboard in a deep recess, did not detain the eye for a moment from the lofty groined ceiling, with its richly carved pendants, all of creamy white, relieved here and there by touches of gold. On one side, this lofty ceiling was supported by pillars and arches, beyond which a lower ceiling, a miniature copy of the higher one, covered the square projection which, with its three large pointed windows, formed the central feature of the building. The room looked less like a place to dine in

than a piece of space enclosed simply for the sake of beautiful outline; and the small dining-table, with the party round it, seemed an odd and insignificant accident, rather than anything connected with the original purpose of the apartment.

But, examined closely, that group was far from insignificant; for the eldest, who was reading in the newspaper the last portentous proceedings of the French parliaments, and turning with occasional comments to his young companions, was as fine a specimen of the old English gentleman as could well have been found in those venerable days of cocked-hats and pigtails. His dark eyes sparkled under projecting brows, made more prominent by bushy grizzled eyebrows; but any apprehension of severity excited by these penetrating eyes, and by a somewhat aquiline nose, was allayed by the good-natured lines about the mouth, which retained all its teeth and its vigor of expression in spite of sixty winters. The forehead sloped a little from the projecting brows, and its peaked outline was made conspicuous by the arrangement of the profusely powdered hair, drawn backward and gathered into a pigtail. He sat in a small hard chair, which did not admit the slightest approach to a lounge, and which showed to advantage the flatness of his back and the breadth of his chest. In fact Sir Christopher Cheverel was a splendid old gentleman, as any one may see who enters the saloon at Cheverel Manor, where his full-length portrait, taken when he was fifty, hangs side by side with that of his wife, the stately lady seated on the lawn.

Looking at Sir Christopher, you would at once have been inclined to hope that he had a full-grown son and heir; but perhaps you would have wished that it might not prove to be the young man on his right hand, in whom a certain resemblance to the Baronet, in the contour of the nose and brow, seemed to indicate a family relationship. If this young man had been less elegant in his person, he would have been remarked for the elegance of his dress. But the perfections of his slim well-proportioned figure were so striking that no one but a tailor could notice the perfections of his velvet coat; and his small white hands, with their blue veins and taper

fingers, quite eclipsed the beauty of his lace ruffles. The face, however — it was difficult to say why — was certainly not pleasing. Nothing could be more delicate than the blond complexion — its bloom set off by the powdered hair — than the veined overhanging eyelids, which gave an indolent expression to the hazel eyes; nothing more finely cut than the transparent nostril and the short upper-lip. Perhaps the chin and lower jaw were too small for an irreproachable profile, but the defect was on the side of that delicacy and *finesse* which was the distinctive characteristic of the whole person, and which was carried out in the clear brown arch of the eyebrows, and the marble smoothness of the sloping forehead. Impossible to say that this face was not eminently handsome; yet, for the majority, both of men and women, it was destitute of charm. Women disliked eyes that seemed to be indolently accepting admiration instead of rendering it; and men, especially if they had a tendency to clumsiness in the nose and ankles, were inclined to think this Antinous in a pigtail a "confounded puppy." I fancy that was frequently the inward interjection of the Rev. Maynard Gilfil, who was seated on the opposite side of the dining-table, though Mr. Gilfil's legs and profile were not at all of a kind to make him peculiarly alive to the impertinence and frivolity of personal advantages. His healthy open face and robust limbs were after an excellent pattern for every-day wear, and, in the opinion of Mr. Bates, the north-country gardener, would have become regimentals "a fain saight" better than the "peaky" features and slight form of Captain Wybrow, notwithstanding that this young gentleman, as Sir Christopher's nephew and destined heir, had the strongest hereditary claim on the gardener's respect, and was undeniably "clean-limbed." But alas! human longings are perversely obstinate; and to the man whose mouth is watering for a peach, it is of no use to offer the largest vegetable marrow. Mr. Gilfil was not sensitive to Mr. Bates's opinion, whereas he *was* sensitive to the opinion of another person, who by no means shared Mr. Bates's preference.

Who the other person was it would not have required a very

keen observer to guess, from a certain eagerness in Mr. Gilfil's glance as that little figure in white tripped along the lawn with the cushions. Captain Wybrow, too, was looking in the same direction, but his handsome face remained handsome — and nothing more.

"Ah," said Sir Christopher, looking up from his paper, "there 's my lady. Ring for coffee, Anthony; we 'll go and join her, and the little monkey Tina shall give us a song."

The coffee presently appeared, brought — not as usual by the footman, in scarlet and drab, but — by the old butler, in threadbare but well-brushed black, who, as he was placing it on the table, said —

"If you please, Sir Christopher, there 's the widow Hartopp a-crying i' the still-room, and begs leave to see your honor."

"I have given Markham full orders about the widow Hartopp," said Sir Christopher, in a sharp decided tone. "I have nothing to say to her."

"Your honor," pleaded the butler, rubbing his hands, and putting on an additional coating of humility, "the poor woman 's dreadful overcome, and says she can't sleep a wink this blessed night without seeing your honor, and she begs you to pardon the great freedom she 's took to come at this time. She cries fit to break her heart."

"Ay, ay; water pays no tax. Well, show her into the library."

Coffee despatched, the two young men walked out through the open window, and joined the ladies on the lawn, while Sir Christopher made his way to the library, solemnly followed by Rupert, his pet blood-hound, who, in his habitual place at the Baronet's right hand, behaved with great urbanity during dinner; but when the cloth was drawn, invariably disappeared under the table, apparently regarding the claret-jug as a mere human weakness, which he winked at, but refused to sanction.

The library lay but three steps from the dining-room, on the other side of a cloistered and matted passage. The oriel window was overshadowed by the great beech, and this, with the flat heavily carved ceiling and the dark hue of the old books

that lined the walls, made the room look sombre, especially on entering it from the dining-room, with its aerial curves and cream-colored fretwork touched with gold. As Sir Christopher opened the door, a jet of brighter light fell on a woman in a widow's dress, who stood in the middle of the room, and made the deepest of curtsies as he entered. She was a buxom woman approaching forty, her eyes red with the tears which had evidently been absorbed by the handkerchief gathered into a damp ball in her right hand.

"Now, Mrs. Hartopp," said Sir Christopher, taking out his gold snuff-box and tapping the lid, "what have you to say to me? Markham has delivered you a notice to quit, I suppose?"

"Oh yis, your honor, an' that's the reason why I've come. I hope your honor'll think better on it, an' not turn me an' my poor children out o' the farm, where my husband al'ys paid his rent as reglar as the day come."

"Nonsense! I should like to know what good it will do you and your children to stay on a farm and lose every farthing your husband has left you, instead of selling your stock and going into some little place where you can keep your money together. It is very well known to every tenant of mine that I never allow widows to stay on their husband's farms."

"Oh, Sir Christifer, if you *would* consider — when I've sold the hay an' corn, an' all the live things, an' paid the debts, an' put the money out to use, I shall have hardly enough to keep our souls an' bodies together. An' how can I rear my boys and put 'em 'prentice? They must go for day laborers, an' their father a man wi' as good belongings as any on your honor's estate, an' niver threshed his wheat afore it was well i' the rick, nor sold the straw off his farm, nor nothin'. Ask all the farmers round if there was a stiddier, soberer man than my husband as attended Ripstone market. An' he says, 'Bessie,' says he — them was his last words — 'you'll mek a shift to manage the farm, if Sir Christifer 'ull let you stay on.'"

"Pooh, pooh!" said Sir Christopher, Mrs. Hartopp's sobs having interrupted her pleadings, "now listen to me, and try

to understand a little common-sense. You are about as able to manage the farm as your best milch cow. You 'll be obliged to have some managing man, who will either cheat you out of your money, or wheedle you into marrying him."

"Oh, your honor, I was never that sort o' woman, an' nobody has known it on me."

"Very likely not, because you were never a widow before. A woman 's always silly enough, but she 's never quite as great a fool as she can be until she puts on a widow's cap. Now, just ask yourself how much the better you will be for staying on your farm at the end of four years, when you 've got through your money, and let your farm run down, and are in arrears for half your rent; or, perhaps, have got some great hulky fellow for a husband, who swears at you and kicks your children."

"Indeed, Sir Christifer, I know a deal o' farmin', an' was brought up i' the thick on it, as you may say. An' there was my husband's great-aunt managed a farm for twenty year, an' left legacies to all her nephys an' nieces, an' even to my husband, as was then a babe unborn."

"Psha! a woman six feet high, with a squint and sharp elbows, I dare say — a man in petticoats. Not a rosy-cheeked widow like you, Mrs. Hartopp."

"Indeed, your honor, I never heard of her squintin', an' they said as she might ha' been married o'er and o'er again, to people as had no call to hanker after her money."

"Ay, ay, that 's what you all think. Every man that looks at you wants to marry you, and would like you the better the more children you have and the less money. But it is useless to talk and cry. I have good reasons for my plans, and never alter them. What you have to do is to make the best of your stock, and to look out for some little place to go to, when you leave The Hollows. Now, go back to Mrs. Bellamy's room, and ask her to give you a dish of tea."

Mrs. Hartopp, understanding from Sir Christopher's tone that he was not to be shaken, curtsied low and left the library, while the Baronet, seating himself at his desk in the oriel window, wrote the following letter: —

MR. MARKHAM, — Take no steps about letting Crowstoot Cottage, as I intend to put in the widow Hartopp when she leaves her farm; and if you will be here at eleven on Saturday morning, I will ride round with you, and settle about making some repairs, and see about adding a bit of land to the take, as she will want to keep a cow and some pigs. Yours faithfully,

CHRISTOPHER CHEVEREL.

After ringing the bell and ordering this letter to be sent, Sir Christopher walked out to join the party on the lawn. But finding the cushions deserted, he walked on to the eastern front of the building, where, by the side of the grand entrance, was the large bow-window of the saloon, opening on to the gravel-sweep, and looking towards a long vista of undulating turf, bordered by tall trees, which, seeming to unite itself with the green of the meadows and a grassy road through a plantation, only terminated with the Gothic arch of a gateway in the far distance. The bow-window was open, and Sir Christopher, stepping in, found the group he sought, examining the progress of the unfinished ceiling. It was in the same style of florid pointed Gothic as the dining-room, but more elaborate in its tracery, which was like petrified lace-work picked out with delicate and varied coloring. About a fourth of it still remained uncolored, and under this part were scaffolding, ladders, and tools; otherwise the spacious saloon was empty of furniture, and seemed to be a grand Gothic canopy for the group of five human figures standing in the centre.

"Francesco has been getting on a little better the last day or two," said Sir Christopher, as he joined the party: "he 's a sad lazy dog, and I fancy he has a knack of sleeping as he stands, with his brushes in his hands. But I must spur him on, or we may not have the scaffolding cleared away before the bride comes, if you show dexterous generalship in your wooing, eh, Anthony? and take your Magdeburg quickly."

"Ah, sir, a siege is known to be one of the most tedious operations in war," said Captain Wybrow, with an easy smile.

"Not when there 's a traitor within the walls in the shape of a soft heart. And that there will be, if Beatrice has her mother's tenderness as well as her mother's beauty."

"What do you think, Sir Christopher," said Lady Cheverel, who seemed to wince a little under her husband's reminiscences, "of hanging Guercino's 'Sibyl' over that door when we put up the pictures? It is rather lost in my sitting-room."

"Very good, my love," answered Sir Christopher, in a tone of punctiliously polite affection; "if you like to part with the ornament from your own room, it will show admirably here. Our portraits, by Sir Joshua, will hang opposite the window, and the 'Transfiguration' at that end. You see, Anthony, I am leaving no good places on the walls for you and your wife. We shall turn you with your faces to the wall in the gallery, and you may take your revenge on us by-and-by."

While this conversation was going on, Mr. Gilfil turned to Caterina and said —

"I like the view from this window better than any other in the house."

She made no answer, and he saw that her eyes were filling with tears; so he added, "Suppose we walk out a little; Sir Christopher and my lady seem to be occupied."

Caterina complied silently, and they turned down one of the gravel walks that led, after many windings under tall trees and among grassy openings, to a large enclosed flower-garden. Their walk was perfectly silent, for Maynard Gilfil knew that Caterina's thoughts were not with him, and she had been long used to make him endure the weight of those moods which she carefully hid from others.

They reached the flower-garden, and turned mechanically in at the gate that opened, through a high thick hedge, on an expanse of brilliant color, which, after the green shades they had passed through, startled the eye like flames. The effect was assisted by an undulation of the ground, which gradually descended from the entrance-gate, and then rose again towards the opposite end, crowned by an orangery. The flowers were glowing with their evening splendors; verbenas and heliotropes were sending up their finest incense. It seemed a gala where all was happiness and brilliancy, and misery could find no sympathy. This was the effect it had on Caterina. As she wound among the beds of gold and blue and pink, where the

flowers seemed to be looking at her with wondering elf-like eyes, knowing nothing of sorrow, the feeling of isolation in her wretchedness overcame her, and the tears, which had been before trickling slowly down her pale cheeks, now gushed forth accompanied with sobs. And yet there was a loving human being close beside her, whose heart was aching for hers, who was possessed by the feeling that she was miserable, and that he was helpless to soothe her. But she was too much irritated by the idea that his wishes were different from hers, that he rather regretted the folly of her hopes than the probability of their disappointment, to take any comfort in his sympathy. Caterina, like the rest of us, turned away from sympathy which she suspected to be mingled with criticism, as the child turns away from the sweetmeat in which it suspects imperceptible medicine.

"Dear Caterina, I think I hear voices," said Mr. Gilfil; "they may be coming this way."

She checked herself like one accustomed to conceal her emotions, and ran rapidly to the other end of the garden, where she seemed occupied in selecting a rose. Presently Lady Cheverel entered, leaning on the arm of Captain Wybrow, and followed by Sir Christopher. The party stopped to admire the tiers of geraniums near the gate; and in the mean time Caterina tripped back with a moss rose-bud in her hand, and, going up to Sir Christopher, said — "There, Padroncello — there is a nice rose for your button-hole."

"Ah, you black-eyed monkey," he said, fondly stroking her cheek; "so you have been running off with Maynard, either to torment or coax him an inch or two deeper into love. Come, come, I want you to sing us '*Ho perduto*' before we sit down to picquet. Anthony goes to-morrow, you know; you must warble him into the right sentimental lover's mood, that he may acquit himself well at Bath." He put her little arm under his, and calling to Lady Cheverel, "Come, Henrietta!" led the way towards the house.

The party entered the drawing-room, which, with its oriel window, corresponded to the library in the other wing, and had also a flat ceiling heavy with carving and blazonry; but

the window being unshaded, and the walls hung with full-length portraits of knights and dames in scarlet, white, and gold, it had not the sombre effect of the library. Here hung the portrait of Sir Anthony Cheverel, who in the reign of Charles II. was the renovator of the family splendor, which had suffered some declension from the early brilliancy of that Chevreuil who came over with the Conqueror. A very imposing personage was this Sir Anthony, standing with one arm akimbo, and one fine leg and foot advanced, evidently with a view to the gratification of his contemporaries and posterity. You might have taken off his splendid peruke, and his scarlet cloak, which was thrown backward from his shoulders, without annihilating the dignity of his appearance. And he had known how to choose a wife, too, for his lady, hanging opposite to him, with her sunny brown hair drawn away in bands from her mild grave face, and falling in two large rich curls on her snowy gently sloping neck, which shamed the harsher hue and outline of her white satin robe, was a fit mother of "large-acred" heirs.

In this room tea was served; and here, every evening, as regularly as the great clock in the court-yard with deliberate bass tones struck nine, Sir Christopher and Lady Cheverel sat down to picquet until half-past ten, when Mr. Gilfil read prayers to the assembled household in the chapel.

But now it was not near nine, and Caterina must sit down to the harpsichord and sing Sir Christopher's favorite airs, by Gluck and Paesiello, whose operas, for the happiness of that generation, were then to be heard on the London stage. It happened this evening that the sentiment of these airs, "*Che farò senza Eurydice?*" and "*Ho perduto il bel sembiante,*" in both of which the singer pours out his yearning after his lost love, came very close to Caterina's own feeling. But her emotion, instead of being a hindrance to her singing, gave her additional power. Her singing was what she could do best; it was her one point of superiority, in which it was probable she would excel the highborn beauty whom Anthony was to woo; and her love, her jealousy, her pride, her rebellion against her destiny, made one stream of passion which welled

forth in the deep rich tones of her voice. She had a rare contralto, which Lady Cheverel, who had high musical taste, had been careful to preserve her from straining.

"Excellent, Caterina," said Lady Cheverel, as there was a pause after the wonderful linked sweetness of "*Che farò.*" "I never heard you sing that so well. Once more!"

It was repeated; and then came, "*Ho perduto,*" which Sir Christopher encored, in spite of the clock, just striking nine. When the last note was dying out he said —

"There 's a clever black-eyed monkey. Now bring out the table for picquet."

Caterina drew out the table and placed the cards; then, with her rapid fairy suddenness of motion, threw herself on her knees, and clasped Sir Christopher's knee. He bent down. stroked her cheek, and smiled.

"Caterina, that is foolish," said Lady Cheverel. "I wish you would leave off those stage-players' antics."

She jumped up, arranged the music on the harpsichord, and then, seeing the Baronet and his lady seated at picquet, quietly glided out of the room.

Captain Wybrow had been leaning near the harpsichord during the singing, and the chaplain had thrown himself on a sofa at the end of the room. They both now took up a book. Mr. Gilfil chose the last number of the "Gentleman's Magazine;" Captain Wybrow, stretched on an ottoman near the door, opened "Faublas;" and there was perfect silence in the room which, ten minutes before, was vibrating to the passionate tones of Caterina.

She had made her way along the cloistered passages, now lighted here and there by a small oil-lamp, to the grand-staircase, which led directly to a gallery running along the whole eastern side of the building, where it was her habit to walk when she wished to be alone. The bright moonlight was streaming through the windows, throwing into strange light and shadow the heterogeneous objects that lined the long walls: Greek statues and busts of Roman emperors; low cabinets filled with curiosities, natural and antiquarian; tropical birds and huge horns of beasts; Hindoo gods and strange

shells; swords and daggers, and bits of chain-armor; Roman lamps and tiny models of Greek temples; and, above all these, queer old family portraits — of little boys and girls, once the hope of the Cheverels, with close-shaven heads imprisoned in stiff ruffs — of faded, pink-faced ladies, with rudimentary features and highly developed head-dresses — of gallant gentlemen, with high hips, high shoulders, and red pointed beards.

Here, on rainy days, Sir Christopher and his lady took their promenade, and here billiards were played; but, in the evening, it was forsaken by all except Caterina — and, sometimes, one other person.

She paced up and down in the moonlight, her pale face and thin white-robed form making her look like the ghost of some former Lady Cheverel come to revisit the glimpses of the moon.

By-and-by she paused opposite the broad window above the portico, and looked out on the long vista of turf and trees now stretching chill and saddened in the moonlight.

Suddenly a breath of warmth and roses seemed to float towards her, and an arm stole gently round her waist, while a soft hand took up her tiny fingers. Caterina felt an electric thrill, and was motionless for one long moment; then she pushed away the arm and hand, and, turning round, lifted up to the face that hung over her, eyes full of tenderness and reproach. The fawn-like unconsciousness was gone, and in that one look were the ground tones of poor little Caterina's nature — intense love and fierce jealousy.

"Why do you push me away, Tina?" said Captain Wybrow in a half-whisper; "are you angry with me for what a hard fate puts upon me? Would you have me cross my uncle — who has done so much for us both — in his dearest wish? You know I have duties — we both have duties — before which feeling must be sacrificed."

"Yes, yes," said Caterina, stamping her foot, and turning away her head; "don't tell me what I know already."

There was a voice speaking in Caterina's mind to which she had never yet given vent. That voice said continually, "Why did he make me love him — why did he let me know he loved

me, if he knew all the while that he could n't brave everything for my sake?" Then love answered, "He was led on by the feeling of the moment, as you have been, Caterina; and now you ought to help him to do what is right." Then the voice rejoined, "It was a slight matter to him. He does n't much mind giving you up. He will soon love that beautiful woman, and forget a poor little pale thing like you."

Thus love, anger, and jealousy were struggling in that young soul.

"Besides, Tina," continued Captain Wybrow in still gentler tones, "I shall not succeed. Miss Assher very likely prefers some one else; and you know I have the best will in the world to fail. I shall come back a hapless bachelor — perhaps to find you already married to the good-looking chaplain, who is over head and ears in love with you. Poor Sir Christopher has made up his mind that you 're to have Gilfil."

"Why will you speak so? You speak from your own want of feeling. Go away from me."

"Don't let us part in anger, Tina. All this may pass away. It 's as likely as not that I may never marry any one at all. These palpitations may carry me off, and you may have the satisfaction of knowing that I shall never be anybody's bridegroom. Who knows what may happen? I may be my own master before I get into the bonds of holy matrimony, and be able to choose my little singing-bird. Why should we distress ourselves before the time?"

"It is easy to talk so when you are not feeling," said Caterina, the tears flowing fast. "It is bad to bear now, whatever may come after. But you don't care about my misery."

"Don't I, Tina?" said Anthony in his tenderest tones, again stealing his arm round her waist, and drawing her towards him. Poor Tina was the slave of this voice and touch. Grief and resentment, retrospect and foreboding, vanished — all life before and after melted away in the bliss of that moment, as Anthony pressed his lips to hers.

Captain Wybrow thought, "Poor Little Tina! it would make her very happy to have me. But she is a mad little thing."

At that moment a loud bell startled Caterina from her trance of bliss. It was the summons to prayers in the chapel, and she hastened away, leaving Captain Wybrow to follow slowly.

It was a pretty sight, that family assembled to worship in the little chapel, where a couple of wax-candles threw a mild faint light on the figures kneeling there. In the desk was Mr. Gilfil, with his face a shade graver than usual. On his right hand, kneeling on their red velvet cushions, were the master and mistress of the household, in their elderly dignified beauty. On his left, the youthful grace of Anthony and Caterina, in all the striking contrast of their coloring — he, with his exquisite outline and rounded fairness, like an Olympian god; she, dark and tiny, like a gypsy changeling. Then there were the domestics kneeling on red-covered forms, — the women headed by Mrs. Bellamy, the natty little old housekeeper, in snowy cap and apron, and Mrs. Sharp, my lady's maid, of somewhat vinegar aspect and flaunting attire; the men by Mr. Bellamy the butler, and Mr. Warren, Sir Christopher's venerable valet.

A few collects from the Evening Service were what Mr. Gilfil habitually read, ending with the simple petition, "Lighten our darkness."

And then they all rose, the servants turning to curtsy and bow as they went out. The family returned to the drawing-room, said good-night to each other, and dispersed — all to speedy slumber except two. Caterina only cried herself to sleep after the clock had struck twelve. Mr. Gilfil lay awake still longer, thinking that very likely Caterina was crying.

Captain Wybrow, having dismissed his valet at eleven, was soon in a soft slumber, his face looking like a fine cameo in high relief on the slightly indented pillow.

CHAPTER III.

THE last chapter has given the discerning reader sufficient insight into the state of things at Cheverel Manor in the summer of 1788. In that summer, we know, the great nation of France was agitated by conflicting thoughts and passions, which were but the beginning of sorrows. And in our Caterina's little breast, too, there were terrible struggles. The poor bird was beginning to flutter and vainly dash its soft breast against the hard iron bars of the inevitable, and we see too plainly the danger, if that anguish should go on heightening instead of being allayed, that the palpitating heart may be fatally bruised.

Meanwhile, if, as I hope, you feel some interest in Caterina and her friends at Cheverel Manor, you are perhaps asking, How came she to be there? How was it that this tiny dark-eyed child of the south, whose face was immediately suggestive of olive-covered hills and taper-lit shrines, came to have her home in that stately English manor-house, by the side of the blond matron, Lady Cheverel — almost as if a humming-bird were found perched on one of the elm-trees in the park, by the side of her ladyship's handsomest pouter-pigeon? Speaking good English, too, and joining in Protestant prayers? Surely she must have been adopted and brought over to England at a very early age. She was.

During Sir Christopher's last visit to Italy with his lady, fifteen years before, they resided for some time at Milan, where Sir Christopher, who was an enthusiast for Gothic architecture, and was then entertaining the project of metamorphosing his plain brick family mansion into the model of a Gothic manor-house, was bent on studying the details of that marble miracle, the Cathedral. Here Lady Cheverel, as at other Italian cities where she made any protracted stay, engaged a *maestro* to give her lessons in singing, for she had then not only fine musical taste, but a fine soprano voice.

Those were days when very rich people used manuscript music, and many a man who resembled Jean Jacques in nothing else, resembled him in getting a livelihood "à copier la musique à tant la page." Lady Cheverel having need of this service, Maestro Albani told her he would send her a *poveraccio* of his acquaintance, whose manuscript was the neatest and most correct he knew of. Unhappily, the *poveraccio* was not always in his best wits, and was sometimes rather slow in consequence; but it would be a work of Christian charity worthy of the beautiful Signora to employ poor Sarti.

The next morning, Mrs. Sharp, then a blooming abigail of three-and-thirty, entered her lady's private room and said, "If you please, my lady, there's the frowiest, shabbiest man you ever saw, outside, and he's told Mr. Warren as the singing-master sent him to see your ladyship. But I think you'll hardly like him to come in here. Belike he's only a beggar."

"Oh yes, show him in immediately."

Mrs. Sharp retired, muttering something about "fleas and worse." She had the smallest possible admiration for fair Ausonia and its natives, and even her profound deference for Sir Christopher and her lady could not prevent her from expressing her amazement at the infatuation of gentlefolks in choosing to sojourn among "Papises, in countries where there was no getting to air a bit o' linen, and where the people smelt o' garlic fit to knock you down."

However she presently reappeared, ushering in a small meagre man, sallow and dingy, with a restless wandering look in his dull eyes, and an excessive timidity about his deep reverences, which gave him the air of a man who had been long a solitary prisoner. Yet through all this squalor and wretchedness there were some traces discernible of comparative youth and former good looks. Lady Cheverel, though not very tender-hearted, still less sentimental, was essentially kind, and liked to dispense benefits like a goddess, who looks down benignly on the halt, the maimed, and the blind that approach her shrine. She was smitten with some compassion at the sight of poor Sarti, who struck her as the mere battered

wreck of a vessel that might have once floated gayly enough on its outward voyage to the sound of pipes and tabors. She spoke gently as she pointed out to him the operatic selections she wished him to copy, and he seemed to sun himself in her auburn, radiant presence, so that when he made his exit with the music-books under his arm, his bow, though not less reverent, was less timid.

It was ten years at least since Sarti had seen anything so bright and stately and beautiful as Lady Cheverel. For the time was far off in which he had trod the stage in satin and feathers, the *primo tenore* of one short season. He had completely lost his voice in the following winter, and had ever since been little better than a cracked fiddle, which is good for nothing but firewood. For, like many Italian singers, he was too ignorant to teach, and if it had not been for his one talent of penmanship, he and his young helpless wife might have starved. Then, just after their third child was born, fever came, swept away the sickly mother and the two eldest children, and attacked Sarti himself, who rose from his sick-bed with enfeebled brain and muscle, and a tiny baby on his hands, scarcely four months old. He lodged over a fruit-shop kept by a stout virago, loud of tongue and irate in temper, but who had had children born to her, and so had taken care of the tiny yellow, black-eyed *bambinetta*, and tended Sarti himself through his sickness. Here he continued to live, earning a meagre subsistence for himself and his little one by the work of copying music, put into his hands chiefly by Maestro Albani. He seemed to exist for nothing but the child: he tended it, he dandled it, he chatted to it, living with it alone in his one room above the fruit-shop, only asking his landlady to take care of the marmoset during his short absences in fetching and carrying home work. Customers frequenting that fruit-shop might often see the tiny Caterina seated on the floor with her legs in a heap of pease, which it was her delight to kick about; or perhaps deposited, like a kitten, in a large basket out of harm's way.

Sometimes, however, Sarti left his little one with another kind of protectress. He was very regular in his devotions,

which he paid thrice a-week in the great cathedral, carrying Caterina with him. Here, when the high morning sun was warming the myriad glittering pinnacles without, and struggling against the massive gloom within, the shadow of a man with a child on his arm might be seen flitting across the more stationary shadows of pillar and mullion, and making its way towards a little tinsel Madonna hanging in a retired spot near the choir. Amid all the sublimities of the mighty cathedral, poor Sarti had fixed on this tinsel Madonna as the symbol of divine mercy and protection, — just as a child, in the presence of a great landscape, sees none of the glories of wood and sky, but sets its heart on a floating feather or insect that happens to be on a level with its eye. Here, then, Sarti worshipped and prayed, setting Caterina on the floor by his side; and now and then, when the cathedral lay near some place where he had to call, and did not like to take her, he would leave her there in front of the tinsel Madonna, where she would sit, perfectly good, amusing herself with low crowing noises and see-sawings of her tiny body. And when Sarti came back, he always found that the Blessed Mother had taken good care of Caterina.

That was briefly the history of Sarti, who fulfilled so well the orders Lady Cheverel gave him, that she sent him away again with a stock of new work. But this time, week after week passed, and he neither reappeared nor sent home the music intrusted to him. Lady Cheverel began to be anxious, and was thinking of sending Warren to inquire at the address Sarti had given her, when one day, as she was equipped for driving out, the valet brought in a small piece of paper, which, he said, had been left for her ladyship by a man who was carrying fruit. The paper contained only three tremulous lines, in Italian: —

"Will the Eccelentissima, for the love of God, have pity on a dying man, and come to him?"

Lady Cheverel recognized the handwriting as Sarti's in spite of its tremulousness, and, going down to her carriage, ordered the Milanese coachman to drive to Strada Quinquagesima, Numero 10. The coach stopped in a dirty narrow street

opposite La Pazzini's fruit-shop, and that large specimen of womanhood immediately presented herself at the door, to the extreme disgust of Mrs. Sharp, who remarked privately to Mr. Warren that La Pazzini was a "hijeous porpis." The fruit-woman, however, was all smiles and deep curtsies to the Eccelentissima, who, not very well understanding her Milanese dialect, abbreviated the conversation by asking to be shown at once to Signor Sarti. La Pazzini preceded her up the dark narrow stairs, and opened a door through which she begged her ladyship to enter. Directly opposite the door lay Sarti, on a low miserable bed. His eyes were glazed, and no movement indicated that he was conscious of their entrance.

On the foot of the bed was seated a tiny child, apparently not three years old, her head covered by a linen cap, her feet clothed with leather boots, above which her little yellow legs showed thin and naked. A frock, made of what had once been a gay flowered silk, was her only other garment. Her large dark eyes shone from out her queer little face, like two precious stones in a grotesque image carved in old ivory. She held an empty medicine-bottle in her hand, and was amusing herself with putting the cork in and drawing it out again, to hear how it would pop.

La Pazzini went up to the bed and said, "Ecco la nobilissima donna!" but directly after screamed out, "Holy mother! he is dead!"

It was so. The entreaty had not been sent in time for Sarti to carry out his project of asking the great English lady to take care of his Caterina. That was the thought which haunted his feeble brain as soon as he began to fear that his illness would end in death. She had wealth — she was kind — she would surely do something for the poor orphan. And so, at last, he sent that scrap of paper which won the fulfilment of his prayer, though he did not live to utter it. Lady Cheverel gave La Pazzini money that the last decencies might be paid to the dead man, and carried away Caterina, meaning to consult Sir Christopher as to what should be done with her. Even Mrs. Sharp had been so smitten with pity by the scene she had witnessed when she was summoned up-stairs to fetch

Caterina, as to shed a small tear, though she was not at all subject to that weakness; indeed, she abstained from it on principle, because, as she often said, it was known to be the worst thing in the world for the eyes.

On the way back to her hotel, Lady Cheverel turned over various projects in her mind regarding Caterina, but at last one gained the preference over all the rest. Why should they not take the child to England, and bring her up there? They had been married twelve years, yet Cheverel Manor was cheered by no children's voices, and the old house would be all the better for a little of that music. Besides, it would be a Christian work to train this little Papist into a good Protestant, and graft as much English fruit as possible on the Italian stem.

Sir Christopher listened to this plan with hearty acquiescence. He loved children, and took at once to the little black-eyed monkey — his name for Caterina all through her short life. But neither he nor Lady Cheverel had any idea of adopting her as their daughter, and giving her their own rank in life. They were much too English and aristocratic to think of anything so romantic. No! the child would be brought up at Cheverel Manor as a protégée, to be ultimately useful, perhaps, in sorting worsteds, keeping accounts, reading aloud, and otherwise supplying the place of spectacles when her ladyship's eyes should wax dim.

So Mrs. Sharp had to procure new clothes, to replace the linen cap, flowered frock, and leathern boots; and now, strange to say, little Caterina, who had suffered many unconscious evils in her existence of thirty moons, first began to know conscious troubles. "Ignorance," says Ajax, "is a painless evil;" so, I should think, is dirt, considering the merry faces that go along with it. At any rate, cleanliness is sometimes a painful good, as any one can vouch who has had his face washed the wrong way, by a pitiless hand with a gold ring on the third finger. If you, reader, have not known that initiatory anguish, it is idle to expect that you will form any approximate conception of what Caterina endured under Mrs. Sharp's new dispensation of soap-and-water. Happily, this

purgatory came presently to be associated in her tiny brain with a passage straightway to a seat of bliss — the sofa in Lady Cheverel's sitting-room, where there were toys to be broken, a ride was to be had on Sir Christopher's knee, and a spaniel of resigned temper was prepared to undergo small tortures without flinching.

CHAPTER IV.

In three months from the time of Caterina's adoption — namely, in the late autumn of 1773 — the chimneys of Cheverel Manor were sending up unwonted smoke, and the servants were awaiting in excitement the return of their master and mistress after a two years' absence. Great was the astonishment of Mrs. Bellamy, the housekeeper, when Mr. Warren lifted a little black-eyed child out of the carriage, and great was Mrs. Sharp's sense of superior information and experience, as she detailed Caterina's history, interspersed with copious comments, to the rest of the upper servants that evening, as they were taking a comfortable glass of grog together in the housekeeper's room.

A pleasant room it was as any party need desire to muster in on a cold November evening. The fireplace alone was a picture: a wide and deep recess with a low brick altar in the middle, where great logs of dry wood sent myriad sparks up the dark chimney-throat; and over the front of this recess a large wooden entablature bearing this motto, finely carved in old English letters, "Fear God and honour the King." And beyond the party, who formed a half-moon with their chairs and well-furnished table round this bright fireplace, what a space of chiaroscuro for the imagination to revel in! Stretching across the far end of the room, what an oak table, high enough surely for Homer's gods, standing on four massive

legs, bossed and bulging like sculptured urns! and, lining the distant wall, what vast cupboards, suggestive of inexhaustible apricot jam and promiscuous butler's perquisites! A stray picture or two had found their way down there, and made agreeable patches of dark brown on the buff-colored walls. High over the loud-resounding double door hung one which, from some indications of a face looming out of blackness, might, by a great synthetic effort, be pronounced a Magdalen. Considerably lower down hung the similitude of a hat and feathers, with portions of a ruff, stated by Mrs. Bellamy to represent Sir Francis Bacon, who invented gunpowder, and, in her opinion, "might ha' been better emplyed."

But this evening the mind is but slightly arrested by the great Verulam, and is in the humor to think a dead philosopher less interesting than a living gardener, who sits conspicuous in the half-circle round the fireplace. Mr. Bates is habitually a guest in the housekeeper's room of an evening, preferring the social pleasures there — the feast of gossip and the flow of grog — to a bachelor's chair in his charming thatched cottage on a little island, where every sound is remote but the cawing of rooks and the screaming of wild geese: poetic sounds, doubtless, but, humanly speaking, not convivial.

Mr. Bates was by no means an average person, to be passed without special notice. He was a sturdy Yorkshireman, approaching forty, whose face Nature seemed to have colored when she was in a hurry, and had no time to attend to *nuances*, for every inch of him visible above his neckcloth was of one impartial redness; so that when he was at some distance your imagination was at liberty to place his lips anywhere between his nose and chin. Seen closer, his lips were discerned to be of a peculiar cut, and I fancy this had something to do with the peculiarity of his dialect, which, as we shall see, was individual rather than provincial. Mr. Bates was further distinguished from the common herd by a perpetual blinking of the eyes; and this, together with the red-rose tint of his complexion, and a way he had of hanging his head forward, and rolling it from side to side as he walked, gave him the air of a Bacchus in a blue apron, who, in the present reduced circum-

stances of Olympus, had taken to the management of his own vines. Yet, as gluttons are often thin, so sober men are often rubicund; and Mr. Bates was sober, with that manly, British, churchman-like sobriety which can carry a few glasses of grog without any perceptible clarification of ideas.

"Dang my boottons!" observed Mr. Bates, who, at the conclusion of Mrs. Sharp's narrative, felt himself urged to his strongest interjection, "it 's what I should n't ha' looked for from Sir Cristhifer an' my ledy, to bring a furrin child into the coonthry; an' depend on 't, whether you an' me lives to see 't or noo, it 'll coom to soom harm. The first sitiation iver I held — it was a hold hancient habbey, wi' the biggest orchard o' apples an' pears you ever see — there was a French valet, an' he stool silk stoockins, an' shirts, an' rings, an' iverythin' he could ley his hands on, an' run awey at last wi' th' missis's jewl-box. They 're all alaike, them furriners. It roons i' th' blood."

"Well," said Mrs. Sharp, with the air of a person who held liberal views, but knew where to draw the line, "I 'm not a-going to defend the furriners, for I 've as good reason to know what they are as most folks, an' nobody 'll ever hear me say but what they 're next door to heathens, and the hile they eat wi' their victuals is enough to turn any Christian's stomach. But for all that — an' for all as the trouble in respect o' washin' and managin' has fell upo' me through the journey — I can't say but what I think as my Lady an' Sir Cristifer's done a right thing by a hinnicent child as does n't know its right hand from its left, i' bringing it where it 'll learn to speak summat better nor gibberish, and be brought up i' the true religion. For as for them furrin churches as Sir Cristifer is so unaccountable mad after, wi' pictures o' men an' women a-showing themselves just for all the world as God made 'em, I think, for my part, as it 's almost a sin to go into 'em."

"You 're likely to have more foreigners, however," said Mr. Warren, who liked to provoke the gardener, "for Sir Christopher has engaged some Italian workmen to help in the alterations in the house."

"Olterations!" exclaimed Mrs. Bellamy, in alarm. "What olterations?"

"Why," answered Mr. Warren, "Sir Chr'stopher, as I understand, is going to make a new thing of the old Manor-house, both inside and out. And he 's got portfolios full of plans and pictures coming. It is to be cased with stone, in the Gothic style — pretty near like the churches, you know, as far as I can make out; and the ceilings are to be beyond anything that 's been seen in the country. Sir Christopher 's been giving a deal of study to it."

"Dear heart alive!" said Mrs. Bellamy, "we shall be pisoned wi' lime an' plaster, an' hev the house full o' workmen colloguing wi' the maids, an' makin' no end o' mischief."

"That ye may ley your life on, Mrs. Bellamy," said Mr. Bates. "Howiver, I 'll noot denay that the Goothic stayle 's prithy anoof, an' it 's woonderful how near them stoon-carvers cuts oot the shapes o' the pine apples, an' shamrucks, an' rooses. I dare sey Sir Cristhifer 'll meck a naice thing o' the Manor, an' there woon't be many gentlemen's houses i' the coonthry as 'll coom up to 't, wi' sich a garden an' pleasure-groons an' wall-fruit as King George maight be prood on."

"Well, I can't think as the house can be better nor it is, Gothic or no Gothic," said Mrs. Bellamy; "an' I 've done the picklin' and preservin' in it fourteen year Michaelmas was a three weeks. But what does my lady say to 't?"

"My lady knows better than cross Sir Cristifer in what he 's set his mind on," said Mr. Bellamy, who objected to the critical tone of the conversation. "Sir Cristifer 'll hev his own way, *that* you may tek your oath. An' i' the right on 't too. He 's a gentleman born, an 's got the money. But come, Mester Bates, fill your glass, an' we 'll drink health an' happiness to his honor an' my lady, and then you shall give us a song. Sir Cristifer does n't come hum from Italy ivery night."

This demonstrable position was accepted without hesitation as ground for a toast; but Mr. Bates, apparently thinking that his song was not an equally reasonable sequence, ignored the second part of Mr. Bellamy's proposal. So Mrs. Sharp, who had been heard to say that she had no thoughts at all of

marrying Mr. Bates, though he was "a sensable fresh-colored man as many a woman 'ud snap at for a husband," enforced Mr. Bellamy's appeal.

"Come, Mr. Bates, let us hear 'Roy's Wife.' I 'd rether hear a good old song like that, nor all the fine Italian toodlin."

Mr. Bates, urged thus flatteringly, stuck his thumbs into the armholes of his waistcoat, threw himself back in his chair with his head in that position in which he could look directly towards the zenith, and struck up a remarkably *staccato* rendering of "Roy's Wife of Aldivalloch." This melody may certainly be taxed with excessive iteration, but that was precisely its highest recommendation to the present audience, who found it all the easier to swell the chorus. Nor did it at all diminish their pleasure that the only particular concerning "Roy's Wife," which Mr. Bates's enunciation allowed them to gather, was that she "chated" him, — whether in the matter of garden stuff or of some other commodity, or why her name should, in consequence, be repeatedly reiterated with exultation, remaining an agreeable mystery.

Mr. Bates's song formed the climax of the evening's good-fellowship, and the party soon after dispersed — Mrs. Bellamy perhaps to dream of quicklime flying among her preserving-pans, or of love-sick housemaids reckless of unswept corners — and Mrs. Sharp to sink into pleasant visions of independent housekeeping in Mr. Bates's cottage, with no bells to answer, and with fruit and vegetables *ad libitum*.

Caterina soon conquered all prejudices against her foreign blood; for what prejudices will hold out against helplessness and broken prattle? She became the pet of the household, thrusting Sir Christopher's favorite bloodhound of that day, Mrs. Bellamy's two canaries, and Mr. Bates's largest Dorking hen, into a merely secondary position. The consequence was, that in the space of a summer's day she went through a great cycle of experiences, commencing with the somewhat acidulated good-will of Mrs. Sharp's nursery discipline. Then came the grave luxury of her ladyship's sitting-room, and, perhaps, the dignity of a ride on Sir Christopher's knee, some-

times followed by a visit with him to the stables, where Caterina soon learned to hear without crying the baying of the chained bloodhounds, and to say, with ostentatious bravery, clinging to Sir Christopher's leg all the while, "Dey not hurt Tina." Then Mrs. Bellamy would perhaps be going out to gather the rose-leaves and lavender, and Tina was made proud and happy by being allowed to carry a handful in her pinafore; happier still, when they were spread out on sheets to dry, so that she could sit down like a frog among them, and have them poured over her in fragrant showers. Another frequent pleasure was to take a journey with Mr. Bates through the kitchen-gardens and the hot-houses, where the rich bunches of green and purple grapes hung from the roof, far out of reach of the tiny yellow hand that could not help stretching itself out towards them; though the hand was sure at last to be satisfied with some delicate-flavored fruit or sweet-scented flower. Indeed, in the long monotonous leisure of that great country-house, you may be sure there was always some one who had nothing better to do than to play with Tina. So that the little southern bird had its northern nest lined with tenderness, and caresses, and pretty things. A loving sensitive nature was too likely, under such nurture, to have its susceptibility heightened into unfitness for an encounter with any harder experience; all the more, because there were gleams of fierce resistance to any discipline that had a harsh or unloving aspect. For the only thing in which Caterina showed any precocity was a certain ingenuity in vindictiveness. When she was five years old she had revenged herself for an unpleasant prohibition by pouring the ink into Mrs. Sharp's work-basket; and once, when Lady Cheverel took her doll from her, because she was affectionately licking the paint off its face, the little minx straightway climbed on a chair and threw down a flower-vase that stood on a bracket. This was almost the only instance in which her anger overcame her awe of Lady Cheverel, who had the ascendancy always belonging to kindness that never melts into caresses, and is severely but uniformly beneficent.

By-and-by the happy monotony of Cheverel Manor was

broken in upon in the way Mr. Warren had announced. The roads through the park were cut up by wagons carrying loads of stone from a neighboring quarry, the green courtyard became dusty with lime, and the peaceful house rang with the sound of tools. For the next ten years Sir Christopher was occupied with the architectural metamorphosis of his old family mansion; thus anticipating, through the prompting of his individual taste, that general reaction from the insipid imitation of the Palladian style, towards a restoration of the Gothic, which marked the close of the eighteenth century. This was the object he had set his heart on, with a singleness of determination which was regarded with not a little contempt by his fox-hunting neighbors, who wondered greatly that a man with some of the best blood in England in his veins, should be mean enough to economize in his cellar, and reduce his stud to two old coach-horses and a hack, for the sake of riding a hobby, and playing the architect. Their wives did not see so much to blame in the matter of the cellar and stables, but they were eloquent in pity for poor Lady Cheverel, who had to live in no more than three rooms at once, and who must be distracted with noises, and have her constitution undermined by unhealthy smells. It was as bad as having a husband with an asthma. Why did not Sir Christopher take a house for her at Bath, or, at least, if he must spend his time in overlooking workmen, somewhere in the neighborhood of the Manor? This pity was quite gratuitous, as the most plentiful pity always is; for though Lady Cheverel did not share her husband's architectural enthusiasm, she had too rigorous a view of a wife's duties, and too profound a deference for Sir Christopher, to regard submission as a grievance. As for Sir Christopher, he was perfectly indifferent to criticism. "An obstinate, crotchety man," said his neighbors. But I, who have seen Cheverel Manor, as he bequeathed it to his heirs, rather attribute that unswerving architectural purpose of his, conceived and carried out through long years of systematic personal exertion, to something of the fervor of genius, as well as inflexibility of will; and in walking through those rooms, with their splendid ceilings and

their meagre furniture, which tell how all the spare money had been absorbed before personal comfort was thought of, I have felt that there dwelt in this old English baronet some of that sublime spirit which distinguishes art from luxury, and worships beauty apart from self-indulgence.

While Cheverel Manor was growing from ugliness into beauty, Caterina too was growing from a little yellow bantling into a whiter maiden, with no positive beauty indeed, but with a certain light airy grace, which, with her large appealing dark eyes, and a voice that, in its low-toned tenderness, recalled the love-notes of the stock-dove, gave her a more than usual charm. Unlike the building, however, Caterina's development was the result of no systematic or careful appliances. She grew up very much like the primroses, which the gardener is not sorry to see within his enclosure, but takes no pains to cultivate. Lady Cheverel taught her to read and write, and say her catechism; Mr. Warren, being a good accountant, gave her lessons in arithmetic, by her ladyship's desire; and Mrs. Sharp initiated her in all the mysteries of the needle. But, for a long time, there was no thought of giving her any more elaborate education. It is very likely that to her dying day Caterina thought the earth stood still, and that the sun and stars moved round it; but so, for the matter of that, did Helen, and Dido, and Desdemona, and Juliet; whence I hope you will not think my Caterina less worthy to be a heroine on that account. The truth is, that, with one exception, her only talent lay in loving; and there, it is probable, the most astronomical of women could not have surpassed her. Orphan and protégée though she was, this supreme talent of hers found plenty of exercise at Cheverel Manor, and Caterina had more people to love than many a small lady and gentleman affluent in silver mugs and blood relations. I think the first place in her childish heart was given to Sir Christopher, for little girls are apt to attach themselves to the finest-looking gentleman at hand, especially as he seldom has anything to do with discipline. Next to the Baronet came Dorcas, the merry rosy-cheeked damsel who was Mrs. Sharp's lieutenant in the nursery, and thus played the part of the raisins in a

dose of senna. It was a black day for Caterina when Dorcas married the coachman, and went, with a great sense of elevation in the world, to preside over a "public" in the noisy town of Sloppeter. A little china-box, bearing the motto "Though lost to sight, to memory dear," which Dorcas sent her as a remembrance, was among Caterina's treasures ten years after.

The one other exceptional talent, you already guess, was music. When the fact that Caterina had a remarkable ear for music, and a still more remarkable voice, attracted Lady Cheverel's notice, the discovery was very welcome both to her and Sir Christopher. Her musical education became at once an object of interest. Lady Cheverel devoted much time to it; and the rapidity of Tina's progress surpassing all hopes, an Italian singing-master was engaged, for several years, to spend some months together at Cheverel Manor. This unexpected gift made a great alteration in Caterina's position. After those first years in which little girls are petted like puppies and kittens, there comes a time when it seems less obvious what they can be good for, especially when, like Caterina, they give no particular promise of cleverness or beauty; and it is not surprising that in that uninteresting period there was no particular plan formed as to her future position. She could always help Mrs. Sharp, supposing she were fit for nothing else, as she grew up; but now, this rare gift of song endeared her to Lady Cheverel, who loved music above all things, and it associated her at once with the pleasures of the drawing-room. Insensibly she came to be regarded as one of the family, and the servants began to understand that Miss Sarti was to be a lady after all.

"And the raight on 't too," said Mr. Bates, "for she has n't the cut of a gell as must work for her bread; she 's as nesh an' dilicate as a paich-blossom — welly laike a linnet, wi' on'y joost body anoof to hold her voice."

But long before Tina had reached this stage of her history, a new era had begun for her, in the arrival of a younger companion than any she had hitherto known. When she was no more than seven, a ward of Sir Christopher's — a lad of

fifteen, Maynard Gilfil by name — began to spend his vacations at Cheverel Manor, and found there no playfellow so much to his mind as Caterina. Maynard was an affectionate lad, who retained a propensity to white rabbits, pet squirrels, and guinea-pigs, perhaps a little beyond the age at which young gentlemen usually look down on such pleasures as puerile. He was also much given to fishing, and to carpentry, considered as a fine art, without any base view to utility. And in all these pleasures it was his delight to have Caterina as his companion, to call her little pet names, answer her wondering questions, and have her toddling after him as you may have seen a Blenheim spaniel trotting after a large setter. Whenever Maynard went back to school, there was a little scene of parting.

"You won't forget me, Tina, before I come back again? I shall leave you all the whip-cord we've made; and don't you let Guinea die. Come, give me a kiss, and promise not to forget me."

As the years wore on, and Maynard passed from school to college, and from a slim lad to a stalwart young man, their companionship in the vacations necessarily took a different form, but it retained a brotherly and sisterly familiarity. With Maynard the boyish affection had insensibly grown into ardent love. Among all the many kinds of first love, that which begins in childish companionship is the strongest and most enduring: when passion comes to unite its force to long affection, love is at its spring-tide. And Maynard Gilfil's love was of a kind to make him prefer being tormented by Caterina to any pleasure, apart from her, which the most benevolent magician could have devised for him. It is the way with those tall large-limbed men, from Samson downwards. As for Tina, the little minx was perfectly well aware that Maynard was her slave; he was the one person in the world whom she did as she pleased with; and I need not tell you that this was a symptom of her being perfectly heart-whole so far as he was concerned: for a passionate woman's love is always overshadowed by fear.

Maynard Gilfil did not deceive himself in his interpretation

of Caterina's feelings, but he nursed the hope that some time or other she would at least care enough for him to accept his love. So he waited patiently for the day when he might venture to say, "Caterina, I love you!" You see, he would have been content with very little, being one of those men who pass through life without making the least clamor about themselves; thinking neither the cut of his coat, nor the flavor of his soup, nor the precise depth of a servant's bow, at all momentous. He thought — foolishly enough, as lovers *will* think — that it was a good augury for him when he came to be domesticated at Cheverel Manor in the quality of chaplain there, and curate of a neighboring parish; judging falsely, from his own case, that habit and affection were the likeliest avenues to love. Sir Christopher satisfied several feelings in installing Maynard as chaplain in his house. He liked the old-fashioned dignity of that domestic appendage; he liked his ward's companionship; and, as Maynard had some private fortune, he might take life easily in that agreeable home, keeping his hunter, and observing a mild regimen of clerical duty, until the Cumbermoor living should fall in, when he might be settled for life in the neighborhood of the Manor. "With Caterina for a wife, too," Sir Christopher soon began to think; for though the good Baronet was not at all quick to suspect what was unpleasant and opposed to his views of fitness, he was quick to see what would dovetail with his own plans; and he had first guessed, and then ascertained, by direct inquiry, the state of Maynard's feelings. He at once leaped to the conclusion that Caterina was of the same mind, or at least would be, when she was old enough. But these were too early days for anything definite to be said or done.

Meanwhile, new circumstances were arising, which, though they made no change in Sir Christopher's plans and prospects, converted Mr. Gilfil's hopes into anxieties, and made it clear to him not only that Caterina's heart was never likely to be his, but that it was given entirely to another.

Once or twice in Caterina's childhood, there had been another boy-visitor at the Manor, younger than Maynard Gilfil — a beautiful boy with brown curls and splendid clothes

on whom Caterina had looked with shy admiration. This was Anthony Wybrow, the son of Sir Christopher's younger sister, and chosen heir of Cheverel Manor. The Baronet had sacrificed a large sum, and even straitened the resources by which he was to carry out his architectural schemes, for the sake of removing the entail from his estate, and making this boy his heir — moved to the step, I am sorry to say, by an implacable quarrel with his elder sister; for a power of forgiveness was not among Sir Christopher's virtues. At length, on the death of Anthony's mother, when he was no longer a curly-headed boy, but a tall young man, with a captain's commission, Cheverel Manor became *his* home too, whenever he was absent from his regiment. Caterina was then a little woman, between sixteen and seventeen, and I need not spend many words in explaining what you perceive to be the most natural thing in the world.

There was little company kept at the Manor, and Captain Wybrow would have been much duller if Caterina had not been there. It was pleasant to pay her attentions — to speak to her in gentle tones, to see her little flutter of pleasure, the blush that just lit up her pale cheek, and the momentary timid glance of her dark eyes, when he praised her singing, leaning at her side over the piano. Pleasant, too, to cut out that chaplain with his large calves! What idle man can withstand the temptation of a woman to fascinate, and another man to eclipse? — especially when it is quite clear to himself that he means no mischief, and shall leave everything to come right again by-and-by. At the end of eighteen months, however, during which Captain Wybrow had spent much of his time at the Manor, he found that matters had reached a point which he had not at all contemplated. Gentle tones had led to tender words, and tender words had called forth a response of looks which made it impossible not to carry on the *crescendo* of love-making. To find one's self adored by a little, graceful, dark-eyed, sweet-singing woman, whom no one need despise, is an agreeable sensation, comparable to smoking the finest Latakia, and also imposes some return of tenderness as a duty.

Perhaps you think that Captain Wybrow, who knew that it

would be ridiculous to dream of his marrying Caterina, must have been a reckless libertine to win her affections in this manner! Not at all. He was a young man of calm passions, who was rarely led into any conduct of which he could not give a plausible account to himself; and the tiny fragile Caterina was a woman who touched the imagination and the affections rather than the senses. He really felt very kindly towards her, and would very likely have loved her — if he had been able to love any one. But nature had not endowed him with that capability. She had given him an admirable figure, the whitest of hands, the most delicate of nostrils, and a large amount of serene self-satisfaction; but, as if to save such a delicate piece of work from any risk of being shattered, she had guarded him from the liability to a strong emotion. There was no list of youthful misdemeanors on record against him, and Sir Christopher and Lady Cheverel thought him the best of nephews, the most satisfactory of heirs, full of grateful deference to themselves, and, above all things, guided by a sense of duty. Captain Wybrow always did the thing easiest and most agreeable to him from a sense of duty: he dressed expensively, because it was a duty he owed to his position; from a sense of duty he adapted himself to Sir Christopher's inflexible will, which it would have been troublesome as well as useless to resist; and, being of a delicate constitution, he took care of his health from a sense of duty. His health was the only point on which he gave anxiety to his friends; and it was owing to this that Sir Christopher wished to see his nephew early married, the more so as a match after the Baronet's own heart appeared immediately attainable. Anthony had seen and admired Miss Assher, the only child of a lady who had been Sir Christopher's earliest love, but who, as things will happen in this world, had married another baronet instead of him. Miss Assher's father was now dead, and she was in possession of a pretty estate. If, as was probable, she should prove susceptible to the merits of Anthony's person and character, nothing could make Sir Christopher so happy as to see a marriage which might be expected to secure the inheritance of Cheverel Manor from getting into the wrong hands.

Anthony had already been kindly received by Lady Assher as the nephew of her early friend; why should he not go to Bath, where she and her daughter were then residing, follow up the acquaintance, and win a handsome, well-bor[illegible] and sufficiently wealthy bride?

Sir Christopher's wishes were communicated to his nephew, who at once intimated his willingness to comply with them — from a sense of duty. Caterina was tenderly informed by her lover of the sacrifice demanded from them both; and three days afterwards occurred the parting scene you have witnessed in the gallery, on the eve of Captain Wybrow's departure for Bath.

CHAPTER V.

The inexorable ticking of the clock is like the throb of pain to sensations made keen by a sickening fear. And so it is with the great clockwork of nature. Daisies and buttercups give way to the brown waving grasses, tinged with the warm red sorrel; the waving grasses are swept away, and the meadows lie like emeralds set in the bushy hedgerows; the tawny-tipped corn begins to bow with the weight of the full ear; the reapers are bending amongst it, and it soon stands in sheaves; then, presently, the patches of yellow stubble lie side by side with streaks of dark-red earth, which the plough is turning up in preparation for the new-thrashed seed. And this passage from beauty to beauty, which to the happy is like the flow of a melody, measures for many a human heart the approach of foreseen anguish — seems hurrying on the moment when the shadow of dread will be followed up by the reality of despair.

How cruelly hasty that summer of 1788 seemed to Caterina! Surely the roses vanished earlier, and the berries on the mountain-ash were more impatient to redden, and bring on the autumn, when she would be face to face with her misery, and

witness Anthony giving all his gentle tones, tender words, and soft looks to another.

Before the end of July, Captain Wybrow had written word that Lady Assher and her daughter were about to fly from the heat and gayety of Bath to the shady quiet of their place at Farleigh, and that he was invited to join the party there. His letters implied that he was on an excellent footing with both the ladies, and gave no hint of a rival; so that Sir Christopher was more than usually bright and cheerful after reading them. At length, towards the close of August, came the announcement that Captain Wybrow was an accepted lover, and after much complimentary and congratulatory correspondence between the two families, it was understood that in September Lady Assher and her daughter would pay a visit to Cheverel Manor, when Beatrice would make the acquaintance of her future relatives, and all needful arrangements could be discussed. Captain Wybrow would remain at Farleigh till then, and accompany the ladies on their journey.

In the interval, every one at Cheverel Manor had something to do by way of preparing for the visitors. Sir Christopher was occupied in consultations with his steward and lawyer, and in giving orders to every one else, especially in spurring on Francesco to finish the saloon. Mr. Gilfil had the responsibility of procuring a lady's horse, Miss Assher being a great rider. Lady Cheverel had unwonted calls to make and invitations to deliver. Mr. Bates's turf, and gravel, and flower-beds were always at such a point of neatness and finish that nothing extraordinary could be done in the garden, except a little extraordinary scolding of the under-gardener, and this addition Mr. Bates did not neglect.

Happily for Caterina, she too had her task, to fill up the long dreary daytime: it was to finish a chair-cushion which would complete the set of embroidered covers for the drawing-room, Lady Cheverel's year-long work, and the only noteworthy bit of furniture in the Manor. Over this embroidery she sat with cold lips and a palpitating heart, thankful that this miserable sensation throughout the daytime seemed to counteract the tendency to tears which returned with night and solitude.

She was most frightened when Sir Christopher approached her. The Baronet's eye was brighter and his step more elastic than ever, and it seemed to him that only the most leaden or churlish souls could be otherwise than brisk and exulting in a world where everything went so well. Dear old gentleman! he had gone through life a little flushed with the power of his will, and now his latest plan was succeeding, and Cheverel Manor would be inherited by a grand-nephew, whom he might even yet live to see a fine young fellow with at least the down on his chin. Why not? one is still young at sixty.

Sir Christopher had always something playful to say to Caterina.

"Now, little monkey, you must be in your best voice; you 're the minstrel of the Manor, you know, and be sure you have a pretty gown and a new ribbon. You must not be dressed in russet, though you are a singing-bird." Or perhaps, "It is your turn to be courted next, Tina. But don't you learn any naughty proud airs. I must have Maynard let off easily."

Caterina's affection for the old Baronet helped her to summon up a smile as he stroked her cheek and looked at her kindly, but that was the moment at which she felt it most difficult not to burst out crying. Lady Cheverel's conversation and presence were less trying; for her ladyship felt no more than calm satisfaction in this family event; and besides, she was further sobered by a little jealousy at Sir Christopher's anticipation of pleasure in seeing Lady Assher, enshrined in his memory as a mild-eyed beauty of sixteen, with whom he had exchanged locks before he went on his first travels. Lady Cheverel would have died rather than confess it, but she could n't help hoping that he would be disappointed in Lady Assher, and rather ashamed of having called her so charming.

Mr. Gilfil watched Caterina through these days with mixed feelings. Her suffering went to his heart; but, even for her sake, he was glad that a love which could never come to good should be no longer fed by false hopes; and how could he help saying to himself, "Perhaps, after a while, Caterina

will be tired of fretting about that cold-hearted puppy, and then —"

At length the much-expected day arrived, and the brightest of September suns was lighting up the yellowing lime-trees, as about five o'clock Lady Assher's carriage drove under the portico. Caterina, seated at work in her own room, heard the rolling of the wheels, followed presently by the opening and shutting of doors, and the sound of voices in the corridors. Remembering that the dinner-hour was six, and that Lady Cheverel had desired her to be in the drawing-room early, she started up to dress, and was delighted to find herself feeling suddenly brave and strong. Curiosity to see Miss Assher — the thought that Anthony was in the house — the wish not to look unattractive, were feelings that brought some color to her lips, and made it easy to attend to her toilet. They would ask her to sing this evening, and she would sing well. Miss Assher should not think her utterly insignificant. So she put on her gray silk gown and her cherry-colored ribbon with as much care as if she had been herself the betrothed; not forgetting the pair of round pearl earrings which Sir Christopher had told Lady Cheverel to give her, because Tina's little ears were so pretty.

Quick as she had been, she found Sir Christopher and Lady Cheverel in the drawing-room chatting with Mr. Gilfil, and telling him how handsome Miss Assher was, but how entirely unlike her mother — apparently resembling her father only.

"Aha!" said Sir Christopher, as he turned to look at Caterina, "what do you think of this, Maynard? Did you ever see Tina look so pretty before? Why, that little gray gown has been made out of a bit of my lady's, has n't it? It does n't take anything much larger than a pocket-handkerchief to dress the little monkey."

Lady Cheverel, too, serenely radiant in the assurance a single glance had given her of Lady Assher's inferiority, smiled approval, and Caterina was in one of those moods of self-possession and indifference which come as the ebb-tide between the struggles of passion. She retired to the piano, and busied herself with arranging her music, not at all insensible to the

pleasure of being looked at with admiration the while, and thinking that, the next time the door opened, Captain Wybrow would enter, and she would speak to him quite cheerfully. But when she heard him come in, and the scent of roses floated towards her, her heart gave one great leap. She knew nothing till he was pressing her hand, and saying, in the old easy way, "Well, Caterina, how do you do? You look quite blooming."

She felt her cheeks reddening with anger that he could speak and look with such perfect nonchalance. Ah! he was too deeply in love with some one else to remember anything he had felt for *her*. But the next moment she was conscious of her folly; — "as if he could show any feeling then!" This conflict of emotions stretched into a long interval the few moments that elapsed before the door opened again, and her own attention, as well as that of all the rest, was absorbed by the entrance of the two ladies.

The daughter was the more striking, from the contrast she presented to her mother, a round-shouldered, middle-sized woman, who had once had the transient pink-and-white beauty of a blonde, with ill-defined features and early embonpoint. Miss Assher was tall, and gracefully though substantially formed, carrying herself with an air of mingled graciousness and self-confidence; her dark-brown hair, untouched by powder, hanging in bushy curls round her face, and falling behind in long thick ringlets nearly to her waist. The brilliant carmine tint of her well-rounded cheeks, and the finely cut outline of her straight nose, produced an impression of splendid beauty, in spite of common-place brown eyes, a narrow forehead, and thin lips. She was in mourning, and the dead black of her crape dress, relieved here and there by jet ornaments, gave the fullest effect to her complexion, and to the rounded whiteness of her arms, bare from the elbow. The first *coup d'œil* was dazzling, and as she stood looking down with a gracious smile on Caterina, whom Lady Cheverel was presenting to her, the poor little thing seemed to herself to feel, for the first time, all the folly of her former dream.

"We are enchanted with your place, Sir Christopher," said Lady Assher, with a feeble kind of pompousness, which she

seemed to be copying from some one else; "I'm sure your nephew must have thought Farleigh wretchedly out of order. Poor Sir John was so very careless about keeping up the house and grounds. I often talked to him about it, but he said, 'Pooh, pooh! as long as my friends find a good dinner and a good bottle of wine, they won't care about my ceilings being rather smoky.' He was so very hospitable, was Sir John."

"I think the view of the house from the park, just after we passed the bridge, particularly fine," said Miss Assher, interposing rather eagerly, as if she feared her mother might be making infelicitous speeches, "and the pleasure of the first glimpse was all the greater because Anthony would describe nothing to us beforehand. He would not spoil our first impressions by raising false ideas. I long to go over the house, Sir Christopher, and learn the history of all your architectural designs, which Anthony says have cost you so much time and study."

"Take care how you set an old man talking about the past, my dear," said the Baronet; "I hope we shall find something pleasanter for you to do than turning over my old plans and pictures. Our friend Mr. Gilfil here has found a beautiful mare for you, and you can scour the country to your heart's content. Anthony has sent us word what a horsewoman you are."

Miss Assher turned to Mr. Gilfil with her most beaming smile, and expressed her thanks with the elaborate graciousness of a person who means to be thought charming, and is sure of success.

"Pray do not thank me," said Mr. Gilfil, "till you have tried the mare. She has been ridden by Lady Sara Linter for the last two years; but one lady's taste may not be like another's in horses, any more than in other matters."

While this conversation was passing, Captain Wybrow was leaning against the mantel-piece, contenting himself with responding from under his indolent eyelids to the glances Miss Assher was constantly directing towards him as she spoke. "She is very much in love with him," thought Caterina. But she was relieved that Anthony remained passive in his attentions. She thought, too, that he was looking paler and more

languid than usual. "If he did n't love her very much — if he sometimes thought of the past with regret, I think I could bear it all, and be glad to see Sir Christopher made happy."

During dinner there was a little incident which confirmed these thoughts. When the sweets were on the table, there was a mould of jelly just opposite Captain Wybrow, and being inclined to take some himself, he first invited Miss Assher, who colored, and said, in rather a sharper key than usual, "Have you not learned by this time that I never take jelly?"

"Don't you?" said Captain Wybrow, whose perceptions were not acute enough for him to notice the difference of a semitone. "I should have thought you were fond of it. There was always some on the table at Farleigh, I think."

"You don't seem to take much interest in my likes and dislikes."

"I 'm too much possessed by the happy thought that you like me," was the *ex officio* reply, in silvery tones.

This little episode was unnoticed by every one but Caterina. Sir Christopher was listening with polite attention to Lady Assher's history of her last man-cook, who was first-rate at gravies, and for that reason pleased Sir John — he was so particular about his gravies, was Sir John: and so they kept the man six years in spite of his bad pastry. Lady Cheverel and Mr. Gilfil were smiling at Rupert the bloodhound, who had pushed his great head under his master's arm, and was taking a survey of the dishes, after snuffing at the contents of the Baronet's plate.

When the ladies were in the drawing-room again, Lady Assher was soon deep in a statement to Lady Cheverel of her views about burying people in woollen.

"To be sure, you must have a woollen dress, because it 's the law, you know; but that need hinder no one from putting linen underneath. I always used to say, 'If Sir John died to-morrow, I would bury him in his shirt;' and I did. And let me advise you to do so by Sir Christopher. You never saw Sir John, Lady Cheverel. He was a large tall man, with a nose just like Beatrice, and so very particular about his shirts."

Miss Assher, meanwhile, had seated herself by Caterina, and, with that smiling affability which seems to say, "I am really not at all proud, though you might expect it of me," said —

"Anthony tells me you sing so very beautifully. I hope we shall hear you this evening."

"Oh yes," said Caterina, quietly, without smiling; "I always sing when I am wanted to sing."

"I envy you such a charming talent. Do you know, I have no ear; I cannot hum the smallest tune, and I delight in music so. Is it not unfortunate? But I shall have quite a treat while I am here; Captain Wybrow says you will give us some music every day."

"I should have thought you would n't care about music if you had no ear," said Caterina, becoming epigrammatic by force of grave simplicity.

"Oh, I assure you, I dote on it; and Anthony is so fond of it; it would be so delightful if I could play and sing to him; though he says he likes me best not to sing, because it does n't belong to his idea of me. What style of music do you like best?"

"I don't know. I like all beautiful music."

"And are you as fond of riding as of music?"

"No; I never ride. I think I should be very frightened."

"Oh no! indeed you would not, after a little practice. I have never been in the least timid. I think Anthony is more afraid for me than I am for myself; and since I have been riding with him, I have been obliged to be more careful, because he is so nervous about me."

Caterina made no reply; but she said to herself, "I wish she would go away and not talk to me. She only wants me to admire her good-nature, and to talk about Anthony."

Miss Assher was thinking at the same time, "This Miss Sarti seems a stupid little thing. Those musical people often are. But she is prettier than I expected; Anthony said she was not pretty."

Happily at this moment Lady Assher called her daughter's attention to the embroidered cushions, and Miss Assher, walk-

ing to the opposite sofa, was soon in conversation with Lady Cheverel about tapestry and embroidery in general, while her mother, feeling herself superseded there, came and placed herself beside Caterina.

"I hear you are the most beautiful singer," was of course the opening remark. "All Italians sing so beautifully. I travelled in Italy with Sir John when we were first married, and we went to Venice, where they go about in gondolas, you know. You don't wear powder, I see. No more will Beatrice; though many people think her curls would look all the better for powder. She has so much hair, has n't she? Our last maid dressed it much better than this; but, do you know, she wore Beatrice's stockings before they went to the wash, and we could n't keep her after that, could we?"

Caterina, accepting the question as a mere bit of rhetorical effect, thought it superfluous to reply, till Lady Assher repeated, "Could we, now?" as if Tina's sanction were essential to her repose of mind. After a faint "No," she went on.

"Maids are so very troublesome, and Beatrice is so particular, you can't imagine. I often say to her, 'My dear, you can't have perfection.' That very gown she has on — to be sure, it fits her beautifully now — but it has been unmade and made up again twice. But she is like poor Sir John — he was so very particular about his own things, was Sir John. Is Lady Cheverel particular?"

"Rather. But Mrs. Sharp has been her maid twenty years."

"I wish there was any chance of our keeping Griffin twenty years. But I am afraid we shall have to part with her because her health is so delicate; and she is so obstinate, she will not take bitters as I want her. *You* look delicate, now. Let me recommend you to take camomile tea in a morning, fasting. Beatrice is so strong and healthy, she never takes any medicine; but if I had had twenty girls, and they had been delicate, I should have given them all camomile tea. It strengthens the constitution beyond anything. Now, will you promise me to take camomile tea?"

"Thank you; I'm not at all ill," said Caterina. "I've always been pale and thin."

Lady Assher was sure camomile tea would make all the difference in the world — Caterina must see if it would n't — and then went dribbling on like a leaky shower-bath, until the early entrance of the gentlemen created a diversion, and she fastened on Sir Christopher, who probably began to think that, for poetical purposes, it would be better not to meet one's first love again, after a lapse of forty years.

Captain Wybrow, of course, joined his aunt and Miss Assher, and Mr. Gilfil tried to relieve Caterina from the awkwardness of sitting aloof and dumb, by telling her how a friend of his had broken his arm and staked his horse that morning, not at all appearing to heed that she hardly listened, and was looking towards the other side of the room. One of the tortures of jealousy is, that it can never turn away its eyes from the thing that pains it.

By-and-by every one felt the need of a relief from chit-chat — Sir Christopher perhaps the most of all — and it was he who made the acceptable proposition —

"Come, Tina, are we to have no music to-night before we sit down to cards? Your ladyship plays at cards, I think?" he added, recollecting himself, and turning to Lady Assher.

"Oh yes! Poor dear Sir John would have a whist-table every night."

Caterina sat down to the harpsichord at once, and had no sooner begun to sing than she perceived with delight that Captain Wybrow was gliding towards the harpsichord, and soon standing in the old place. This consciousness gave fresh strength to her voice; and when she noticed that Miss Assher presently followed him with that air of ostentatious admiration which belongs to the absence of real enjoyment, her closing *bravura* was none the worse for being animated by a little triumphant contempt.

"Why, you are in better voice than ever, Caterina," said Captain Wybrow, when she had ended. "This is rather different from Miss Hibbert's small piping that we used to be glad of at Farleigh, is it not, Beatrice?"

"Indeed it is. You are a most enviable creature, Miss Sarti — Caterina — may I not call you Caterina? for I have

heard Anthony speak of you so often, I seem to know you quite well. You will let me call you Caterina?"

"Oh yes, every one calls me Caterina, only when they call me Tina."

"Come, come, more singing, more singing, little monkey," Sir Christopher called out from the other side of the room. "We have not had half enough yet."

Caterina was ready enough to obey, for while she was singing she was queen of the room, and Miss Assher was reduced to grimacing admiration. Alas! you see what jealousy was doing in this poor young soul. Caterina, who had passed her life as a little unobtrusive singing-bird, nestling so fondly under the wings that were outstretched for her, her heart beating only to the peaceful rhythm of love, or fluttering with some easily stifled fear, had begun to know the fierce palpitations of triumph and hatred.

When the singing was over, Sir Christopher and Lady Cheverel sat down to whist with Lady Assher and Mr. Gilfil, and Caterina placed herself at the Baronet's elbow as if to watch the game, that she might not appear to thrust herself on the pair of lovers. At first she was glowing with her little triumph, and felt the strength of pride; but her eye *would* steal to the opposite side of the fireplace, where Captain Wybrow had seated himself close to Miss Assher, and was leaning with his arm over the back of the chair, in the most lover-like position. Caterina began to feel a choking sensation. She could see, almost without looking, that he was taking up her arm to examine her bracelet; their heads were bending close together, her curls touching his cheek — now he was putting his lips to her hand. Caterina felt her cheeks burn — she could sit no longer. She got up, pretended to be gliding about in search of something, and at length slipped out of the room.

Outside, she took a candle, and, hurrying along the passages and up the stairs to her own room, locked the door.

"Oh, I cannot bear it, I cannot bear it!" the poor thing burst out aloud, clasping her little fingers, and pressing them back against her forehead, as if she wanted to break them.

Then she walked hurriedly up and down the room.

"And this must go on for days and days, and I must see it."

She looked about nervously for something to clutch. There was a muslin kerchief lying on the table; she took it up and tore it into shreds as she walked up and down, and then pressed it into hard balls in her hand.

"And Anthony," she thought, "he can do this without caring for what I feel. Oh, he can forget everything: how he used to say he loved me — how he used to take my hand in his as we walked — how he used to stand near me in the evenings for the sake of looking into my eyes."

"Oh, it is cruel, t is cruel!" she burst out again aloud, as all those love-moments in the past returned upon her. Then the tears gushed forth, she threw herself on her knees by the bed, and sobbed bitterly.

She did not know how long she had been there, till she was startled by the prayer-bell; when, thinking Lady Cheverel might perhaps send some one to inquire after her, she rose, and began hastily to undress, that there might be no possibility of her going down again. She had hardly unfastened her hair, and thrown a loose gown about her, before there was a knock at the door, and Mrs. Sharp's voice said — "Miss Tina my lady wants to know if you're ill."

Caterina opened the door and said, "Thank you, dear Mrs Sharp; I have a bad headache; please tell my lady I felt it come on after singing."

"Then, goodness me! why aren't you in bed, instead o' standing shivering there, fit to catch your death? Come, let me fasten up your hair and tuck you up warm."

"Oh no, thank you; I shall really be in bed very soon. Good-night, dear Sharpy; don't scold; I will be good, and get into bed."

Caterina kissed her old friend coaxingly, but Mrs. Sharp was not to be "come over" in that way, and insisted on seeing her former charge in bed, taking away the candle which the poor child had wanted to keep as a companion.

But it was impossible to lie there long with that beating

heart; and the little white figure was soon out of bed again, seeking relief in the very sense of chill and uncomfort. It was light enough for her to see about her room, for the moon, nearly at full, was riding high in the heavens among scattered hurrying clouds. Caterina drew aside the window-curtain, and, sitting with her forehead pressed against the cold pane, looked out on the wide stretch of park and lawn.

How dreary the moonlight is! robbed of all its tenderness and repose by the hard driving wind. The trees are harassed by that tossing motion, when they would like to be at rest; the shivering grass makes her quake with sympathetic cold; and the willows by the pool, bent low and white under that invisible harshness, seem agitated and helpless like herself. But she loves the scene the better for its sadness: there is some pity in it. It is not like that hard unfeeling happiness of lovers, flaunting in the eyes of misery.

She set her teeth tight against the window-frame, and the tears fell thick and fast. She was so thankful she could cry, for the mad passion she had felt when her eyes were dry frightened her. If that dreadful feeling were to come on when Lady Cheverel was present, she should never be able to contain herself.

Then there was Sir Christopher — so good to her — so happy about Anthony's marriage; and all the while she had these wicked feelings.

"Oh, I cannot help it, I cannot help it!" she said in a loud whisper between her sobs. "O God, have pity upon me!"

In this way Tina wore out the long hours of the windy moonlight, till at last, with weary aching limbs, she lay down in bed again, and slept from mere exhaustion.

While this poor little heart was being bruised with a weight too heavy for it, Nature was holding on her calm inexorable way, in unmoved and terrible beauty. The stars were rushing in their eternal courses; the tides swelled to the level of the last expectant weed; the sun was making brilliant day to busy nations on the other side of the swift earth. The stream of human thought and deed was hurrying and broadening onward. The astronomer was at his telescope; the great

ships were laboring over the waves; the toiling eagerness of commerce, the fierce spirit of revolution, were only ebbing in brief rest; and sleepless statesmen were dreading the possible crisis of the morrow. What were our little Tina and her trouble in this mighty torrent, rushing from one awful unknown to another? Lighter than the smallest centre of quivering life in the water-drop, hidden and uncared for as the pulse of anguish in the breast of the tiniest bird that has fluttered down to its nest with the long-sought food, and has found the nest torn and empty.

CHAPTER VI.

The next morning, when Caterina was waked from her heavy sleep by Martha bringing in the warm water, the sun was shining, the wind had abated, and those hours of suffering in the night seemed unreal and dreamlike, in spite of weary limbs and aching eyes. She got up and began to dress with a strange feeling of insensibility, as if nothing could make her cry again; and she even felt a sort of longing to be downstairs in the midst of company, that she might get rid of this benumbed condition by contact.

There are few of us that are not rather ashamed of our sins and follies as we look out on the blessed morning sunlight, which comes to us like a bright-winged angel beckoning us to quit the old path of vanity that stretches its dreary length behind us; and Tina, little as she knew about doctrines and theories, seemed to herself to have been both foolish and wicked yesterday. To-day she would try to be good; and when she knelt down to say her short prayer — the very form she had learned by heart when she was ten years old — she added, "O God, help me to bear it!"

That day the prayer seemed to be answered, for after some

remarks on her pale looks at breakfast, Caterina passed the morning quietly, Miss Assher and Captain Wybrow being out on a riding excursion. In the evening there was a dinner-party, and after Caterina had sung a little, Lady Cheverel, remembering that she was ailing, sent her to bed, where she soon sank into a deep sleep. Body and mind must renew their force to suffer as well as to enjoy.

On the morrow, however, it was rainy, and every one must stay in-doors; so it was resolved that the guests should be taken over the house by Sir Christopher, to hear the story of the architectural alterations, the family portraits, and the family relics. All the party, except Mr. Gilfil, were in the drawing-room when the proposition was made; and when Miss Assher rose to go, she looked towards Captain Wybrow, expecting to see him rise too; but he kept his seat near the fire, turning his eyes towards the newspaper which he had been holding unread in his hand.

"Are you not coming, Anthony?" said Lady Cheverel, noticing Miss Assher's look of expectation.

"I think not, if you 'll excuse me," he answered, rising and opening the door; "I feel a little chilled this morning, and I am afraid of the cold rooms and draughts."

Miss Assher reddened, but said nothing, and passed on, Lady Cheverel accompanying her.

Caterina was seated at work in the oriel window. It was the first time she and Anthony had been alone together, and she had thought before that he wished to avoid her. But now, surely, he wanted to speak to her — he wanted to say something kind. Presently he rose from his seat near the fire, and placed himself on the ottoman opposite to her.

"Well, Tina, and how have you been all this long time?"

Both the tone and the words were an offence to her; the tone was so different from the old one, the words were so cold and unmeaning. She answered, with a little bitterness —

"I think you need n't ask. It does n't make much difference to you."

"Is that the kindest thing you have to say to me after my long absence?"

"I don't know why you should expect me to say kind things."

Captain Wybrow was silent. He wished very much to avoid allusions to the past or comments on the present. And yet he wished to be well with Caterina. He would have liked to caress her, make her presents, and have her think him very kind to her. But these women are plaguy perverse! There 's no bringing them to look rationally at anything. At last he said, "I hoped you would think all the better of me, Tina, for doing as I have done, instead of bearing malice towards me. I hoped you would see that it is the best thing for every one — the best for your happiness too."

"Oh, pray don't make love to Miss Assher for the sake of my happiness," answered Tina.

At this moment the door opened, and Miss Assher entered, to fetch her reticule, which lay on the harpsichord. She gave a keen glance at Caterina, whose face was flushed, and saying to Captain Wybrow with a slight sneer, "Since you are so chill I wonder you like to sit in the window," left the room again immediately.

The lover did not appear much discomposed, but sat quiet a little longer, and then, seating himself on the music-stool, drew it near to Caterina, and, taking her hand, said, "Come, Tina, look kindly at me, and let us be friends. I shall always be your friend."

"Thank you," said Caterina, drawing away her hand. "You are very generous. But pray move away. Miss Assher may come in again."

"Miss Assher be hanged!" said Anthony, feeling the fascination of old habit returning on him in his proximity to Caterina. He put his arm round her waist, and leaned his cheek down to hers. The lips could n't help meeting after that; but the next moment, with heart swelling and tears rising, Caterina burst away from him, and rushed out of the room.

CHAPTER VII.

Caterina tore herself from Anthony with the desperate effort of one who has just self-recollection enough left to be conscious that the fumes of charcoal will master his senses unless he bursts a way for himself to the fresh air; but when she reached her own room, she was still too intoxicated with that momentary revival of old emotions, too much agitated by the sudden return of tenderness in her lover, to know whether pain or pleasure predominated. It was as if a miracle had happened in her little world of feeling, and made the future all vague — a dim morning haze of possibilities, instead of the sombre wintry daylight and clear rigid outline of painful certainty.

She felt the need of rapid movement. She must walk out in spite of the rain. Happily, there was a thin place in the curtain of clouds which seemed to promise that now, about noon, the day had a mind to clear up. Caterina thought to herself, "I will walk to the Mosslands, and carry Mr. Bates the comforter I have made for him, and then Lady Cheverel will not wonder so much at my going out." At the hall door she found Rupert the old bloodhound, stationed on the mat, with the determination that the first person who was sensible enough to take a walk that morning should have the honor of his approbation and society. As he thrust his great black and tawny head under her hand, and wagged his tail with vigorous eloquence, and reached the climax of his welcome by jumping up to lick her face, which was at a convenient licking height for him, Caterina felt quite grateful to the old dog for his friendliness. Animals are such agreeable friends — they ask no questions, they pass no criticisms.

The "Mosslands" was a remote part of the grounds, encircled by the little stream issuing from the pool; and certainly, for a wet day, Caterina could hardly have chosen a less suitable walk, for though the rain was abating, and presently



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ceased altogether, there was still a smart shower falling from the trees which arched over the greater part of her way. But she found just the desired relief from her feverish excitement in laboring along the wet paths with an umbrella that made her arm ache. This amount of exertion was to her tiny body what a day's hunting often was to Mr. Gilfil, who at times had *his* fits of jealousy and sadness to get rid of, and wisely had recourse to nature's innocent opium — fatigue.

When Caterina reached the pretty arched wooden bridge which formed the only entrance to the Mosslands for any but webbed feet, the sun had mastered the clouds, and was shining through the boughs of the tall elms that made a deep nest for the gardener's cottage — turning the raindrops into diamonds, and inviting the nasturtium flowers creeping over the porch and low-thatched roof to lift up their flame-colored heads once more. The rooks were cawing with many-voiced monotony, apparently — by a remarkable approximation to human intelligence — finding great conversational resources in the change of weather. The mossy turf, studded with the broad blades of marsh-loving plants, told that Mr. Bates's nest was rather damp in the best of weather; but he was of opinion that a little external moisture would hurt no man who was not perversely neglectful of that obvious and providential antidote, rum-and-water.

Caterina loved this nest. Every object in it, every sound that haunted it, had been familiar to her from the days when she had been carried thither on Mr. Bates's arm, making little cawing noises to imitate the rooks, clapping her hands at the green frogs leaping in the moist grass, and fixing grave eyes on the gardener's fowls cluck-clucking under their pens. And now the spot looked prettier to her than ever; it was so out of the way of Miss Assher, with her brilliant beauty, and personal claims, and small civil remarks. She thought Mr. Bates would not be come in to his dinner yet, so she would sit down and wait for him.

But she was mistaken. Mr. Bates was seated in his arm-chair, with his pocket-handkerchief thrown over his face as the most eligible mode of passing away those superfluous

hours between meals when the weather drives a man indoors. Roused by the furious barking of his chained bull-dog, he descried his little favorite approaching, and forthwith presented himself at the doorway, looking disproportionately tall compared with the height of his cottage. The bull-dog, meanwhile, unbent from the severity of his official demeanor, and commenced a friendly interchange of ideas with Rupert.

Mr. Bates's hair was now gray, but his frame was none the less stalwart, and his face looked all the redder, making an artistic contrast with the deep blue of his cotton neckerchief, and of his linen apron twisted into a girdle round his waist.

"Why, dang my boottons, Miss Tiny," he exclaimed, "hoo coom ye to coom oot dabblin' your faet laike a little Muscovy duck, sich a day as this? Not but what ai 'm delaighted to sae ye. Here Hesther," he called to his old humpbacked housekeeper, "tek the young ledy's oombrella an' spread it oot to dray. Coom, coom in, Miss Tiny, an' set ye doon by the faire an' dray yer faet, an' hev summat warm to kape ye from ketchin' coold."

Mr. Bates led the way, stooping under the door-places, into his small sitting-room, and, shaking the patchwork cushion in his arm-chair, moved it to within a good roasting distance of the blazing fire.

"Thank you, uncle Bates" (Caterina kept up her childish epithets for her friends, and this was one of them); "not quite so close to the fire, for I am warm with walking."

"Eh, but yer shoes are faine an' wet, an' ye must put up yer faet on the fender. Rare big faet, baint 'em? — aboot the saize of a good big spoon. I woonder ye can mek a shift to stan' on 'em. Now, what 'll ye hev to warm yer insaide? — a drop o' hot elder wain, now?"

"No, not anything to drink, thank you; it is n't very long since breakfast," said Caterina, drawing out the comforter from her deep pocket. Pockets were capacious in those days. "Look here, uncle Bates, here is what I came to bring you. I made it on purpose for you. You must wear it this winter, and give your red one to old Brooks."

"Eh, Miss Tiny, this *is* a beauty. An' ye made it all wi' yer little fingers for an old feller laike mae! I tek it very kaind on ye, an' I belave ye I'll wear it, and be prood on 't too. These sthraipes, blue an' whaite, now, they mek it uncommon pritty."

"Yes, that will suit your complexion, you know, better than the old scarlet one. I know Mrs. Sharp will be more in love with you than ever when she sees you in the new one."

"My complexion, ye little roogue! ye 're a laughin' at me. But talkin' o' complexions, what a beautiful color the bride as is to be has on her cheeks! Dang my boottons! she looks faine and handsome o' hossback — sits as upraight as a dart, wi' a figure like a statty! Misthress Sharp has promised to put me behaind one o' the doors when the ladies are comin' doon to dinner, so as I may sae the young un i' full dress, wi' all her curls an' that. Misthress Sharp says she 's almost beautifuller nor my ledy was when she was yoong; an' I think ye 'll noot faind many i' the counthry as 'll coom up to that."

"Yes, Miss Assher is very handsome," said Caterina, rather faintly, feeling the sense of her own insignificance returning at this picture of the impression Miss Assher made on others.

"Well, an' I hope she 's good too, an 'll mek a good naice to Sir Cristhifer an' my ledy. Misthress Griffin, the maid, says as she 's rether tatchy and find-fautin' aboot her cloothes, laike. But she 's yoong — she 's yoong; that 'll wear off when she 's got a hoosband, an' children, an' summat else to think on. Sir Cristhifer 's fain an' delaighted, I can see. He says to me th' other mornin', says he, 'Well, Bates, what do you think of your young misthress as is to be?' An' I says, 'Whay, yer honor, I think she 's as fain a lass as iver I set eyes on; an' I wish the Captain luck in a fain family, an' your honor laife an' health to see 't.' Mr. Warren says as the masther 's all for forrardin' the weddin', an' it 'll very laike be afore the autumn 's oot."

As Mr. Bates ran on, Caterina felt something like a painful contraction at her heart. "Yes," she said, rising, "I dare say it will. Sir Christopher is very anxious for it. But I must

go, uncle Bates; Lady Cheverel will be wanting me, and it is your dinner-time."

"Nay, my dinner doon't sinnify a bit; but I moos n't kaep ye if my ledy wants ye. Though I hev n't thanked ye half anoof for the comfiter — the wrapraskil, as they call 't. My feckins, it 's a beauty. But ye look very whaite and sadly, Miss Tiny; I doubt ye 're poorly; an' this walking i' th' wet is n't good for ye."

"Oh yes, it is indeed," said Caterina, hastening out, and taking up her umbrella from the kitchen floor. "I must really go now; so good-by."

She tripped off, calling Rupert, while the good gardener, his hands thrust deep in his pockets, stood looking after her and shaking his head with rather a melancholy air.

"She gets moor nesh and dillicat than iver," he said, half to himself and half to Hester. "I should n't woonder if she fades away laike them cyclamens as I transplanted. She puts me i' maind on 'em somehow, hangin' on their little thin stalks, so whaite an' tinder."

The poor little thing made her way back, no longer hungering for the cold moist air as a counteractive of inward excitement, but with a chill at her heart which made the outward chill only depressing. The golden sunlight beamed through the dripping boughs like a Shechinah, or visible divine presence, and the birds were chirping and trilling their new autumnal songs so sweetly, it seemed as if their throats, as well as the air, were all the clearer for the rain; but Caterina moved through all this joy and beauty like a poor wounded leveret painfully dragging its little body through the sweet clover-tufts — for it, sweet in vain. Mr. Bates's words about Sir Christopher's joy, Miss Assher's beauty, and the nearness of the wedding, had come upon her like the pressure of a cold hand, rousing her from confused dozing to a perception of hard, familiar realities. It is so with emotional natures, whose thoughts are no more than the fleeting shadows cast by feeling: to them words are facts, and even when known to be false, have a mastery over their smiles and tears. Caterina entered her own room again, with no other change from her

former state of despondency and wretchedness than an additional sense of injury from Anthony. His behavior towards her in the morning was a new wrong. To snatch a caress when she justly claimed an expression of penitence, of regret, of sympathy, was to make more light of her than ever.

CHAPTER VIII.

That evening Miss Assher seemed to carry herself with unusual haughtiness, and was coldly observant of Caterina. There was unmistakably thunder in the air. Captain Wybrow appeared to take the matter very easily, and was inclined to brave it out by paying more than ordinary attention to Caterina. Mr. Gilfil had induced her to play a game at draughts with him, Lady Assher being seated at picquet with Sir Christopher, and Miss Assher in determined conversation with Lady Cheverel. Anthony, thus left as an odd unit, sauntered up to Caterina's chair, and leaned behind her, watching the game. Tina, with all the remembrances of the morning thick upon her, felt her cheeks becoming more and more crimson, and at last said impatiently, "I wish you would go away."

This happened directly under the view of Miss Assher, who saw Caterina's reddening cheeks, saw that she said something impatiently, and that Captain Wybrow moved away in consequence. There was another person, too, who had noticed this incident with strong interest, and who was moreover aware that Miss Assher not only saw, but keenly observed what was passing. That other person was Mr. Gilfil, and he drew some painful conclusions which heightened his anxiety for Caterina.

The next morning, in spite of the fine weather, Miss Assher declined riding, and Lady Cheverel, perceiving that there was something wrong between the lovers, took care that they should be left together in the drawing-room. Miss Assher, seated on

the sofa near the fire, was busy with some fancy-work, in which she seemed bent on making great progress this morning. Captain Wybrow sat opposite with a newspaper in his hand, from which he obligingly read extracts with an elaborately easy air, wilfully unconscious of the contemptuous silence with which she pursued her filigree work. At length he put down the paper, which he could no longer pretend not to have exhausted, and Miss Assher then said —

"You seem to be on very intimate terms with Miss Sarti."

"With Tina? oh yes; she has always been the pet of the house, you know. We have been quite brother and sister together."

"Sisters don't generally color so very deeply when their brothers approach them."

"Does she color? I never noticed it. But she's a timid little thing."

"It would be much better if you would not be so hypocritical, Captain Wybrow. I am confident there has been some flirtation between you. Miss Sarti, in her position, would never speak to you with the petulance she did last night, if you had not given her some kind of claim on you."

"My dear Beatrice, now do be reasonable; do ask yourself what earthly probability there is that I should think of flirting with poor little Tina. *Is* there anything about her to attract that sort of attention? She is more child than woman. One thinks of her as a little girl to be petted and played with."

"Pray, what were you playing at with her yesterday morning, when I came in unexpectedly, and her cheeks were flushed, and her hands trembling?"

"Yesterday morning? — Oh, I remember. You know I always tease her about Gilfil, who is over head and ears in love with her; and she is angry at that, — perhaps, because she likes him. They were old playfellows years before I came here, and Sir Christopher has set his heart on their marrying."

"Captain Wybrow, you are very false. It had nothing to do with Mr. Gilfil that she colored last night when you leaned over her chair. You might just as well be candid. If your

own mind is not made up, pray do no violence to yourself. I am quite ready to give way to Miss Sarti's superior attractions. Understand that, so far as I am concerned, you are perfectly at liberty. I decline any share in the affection of a man who forfeits my respect by duplicity."

In saying this Miss Assher rose, and was sweeping haughtily out of the room, when Captain Wybrow placed himself before her, and took her hand.

"Dear, dear Beatrice, be patient; do not judge me so rashly. Sit down again, sweet," he added in a pleading voice, pressing both her hands between his, and leading her back to the sofa, where he sat down beside her. Miss Assher was not unwilling to be led back or to listen, but she retained her cold and haughty expression.

"Can you not trust me, Beatrice? Can you not believe me, although there may be things I am unable to explain?"

"Why should there be anything you are unable to explain? An honorable man will not be placed in circumstances which he cannot explain to the woman he seeks to make his wife. He will not ask her to *believe* that he acts properly; he will let her *know* that he does so. Let me go, sir."

She attempted to rise, but he passed his hand round her waist and detained her.

"Now, Beatrice dear," he said imploringly, "can you not understand that there are things a man does n't like to talk about — secrets that he must keep for the sake of others, and not for his own sake? Everything that relates to myself you may ask me, but do not ask me to tell other people's secrets. Don't you understand me?"

"Oh yes," said Miss Assher, scornfully, "I understand. Whenever you make love to a woman — that is her secret, which you are bound to keep for her. But it is folly to be talking in this way, Captain Wybrow. It is very plain that there is some relation more than friendship between you and Miss Sarti. Since you cannot explain that relation, there is no more to be said between us."

"Confound it, Beatrice! you 'll drive me mad. Can a fellow help a girl's falling in love with him? Such things

are always happening, but men don't talk of them. These fancies will spring up without the slightest foundation, especially when a woman sees few people; they die out again when there is no encouragement. If you could like me, you ought not to be surprised that other people can; you ought to think the better of them for it."

"You mean to say, then, that Miss Sarti is in love with you without your ever having made love to her."

"Do not press me to say such things, dearest. It is enough that you know I love you — that I am devoted to you. You naughty queen, you, you know there is no chance for any one else where you are. You are only tormenting me, to prove your power over me. But don't be too cruel; for you know they say I have another heart-disease besides love, and these scenes bring on terrible palpitations."

"But I must have an answer to this one question," said Miss Assher, a little softened: "has there been, or is there, any love on your side towards Miss Sarti? I have nothing to do with her feelings, but I have a right to know yours."

"I like Tina very much; who would not like such a little simple thing? You would not wish me not to like her? But love — that is a very different affair. One has a brotherly affection for such a woman as Tina; but it is another sort of woman that one loves."

These last words were made doubly significant by a look of tenderness, and a kiss imprinted on the hand Captain Wybrow held in his. Miss Assher was conquered. It was so far from probable that Anthony should love that pale insignificant little thing — so highly probable that he should adore the beautiful Miss Assher. On the whole, it was rather gratifying that other women should be languishing for her handsome lover; he really was an exquisite creature. Poor Miss Sarti! Well, she would get over it.

Captain Wybrow saw his advantage. "Come, sweet love," he continued, "let us talk no more about unpleasant things. You will keep Tina's secret, and be very kind to her — won't you? — for my sake. But you will ride out now? See what a glorious day it is for riding. Let me order the horses. I'm

terribly in want of the air. Come, give me one forgiving kiss, and say you will go."

Miss Assher complied with the double request, and then went to equip herself for the ride, while her lover walked to the stables.

CHAPTER IX.

Meanwhile Mr. Gilfil, who had a heavy weight on his mind, had watched for the moment when, the two elder ladies having driven out, Caterina would probably be alone in Lady Cheverel's sitting-room. He went up and knocked at the door.

"Come in," said the sweet mellow voice, always thrilling to him as the sound of rippling water to the thirsty.

He entered and found Caterina standing in some confusion, as if she had been startled from a reverie. She felt relieved when she saw it was Maynard, but, the next moment, felt a little pettish that he should have come to interrupt and frighten her.

"Oh, it is you, Maynard! Do you want Lady Cheverel?"

"No, Caterina," he answered gravely; "I want you. I have something very particular to say to you. Will you let me sit down with you for half an hour?"

"Yes, dear old preacher," said Caterina, sitting down with an air of weariness; "what is it?"

Mr. Gilfil placed himself opposite to her, and said, "I hope you will not be hurt, Caterina, by what I am going to say to you. I do not speak from any other feelings than real affection and anxiety for you. I put everything else out of the question. You know you are more to me than all the world; but I will not thrust before you a feeling which you are unable to return. I speak to you as a brother — the old Maynard that used to scold you for getting your fishing-line

tangled ten years ago. You will not believe that I have any mean, selfish motive in mentioning things that are painful to you?"

"No; I know you are very good," said Caterina, abstractedly.

"From what I saw yesterday evening," Mr. Gilfil went on, hesitating and coloring slightly, "I am led to fear — pray forgive me if I am wrong, Caterina — that you — that Captain Wybrow is base enough still to trifle with your feelings, that he still allows himself to behave to you as no man ought who is the declared lover of another woman."

"What do you mean, Maynard?" said Caterina, with anger flashing from her eyes. "Do you mean that I let him make love to me? What right have you to think that of me? What do you mean that you saw yesterday evening?"

"Do not be angry, Caterina. I don't suspect you of doing wrong. I only suspect that heartless puppy of behaving so as to keep awake feelings in you that not only destroy your own peace of mind, but may lead to very bad consequences with regard to others. I want to warn you that Miss Assher has her eyes open on what passes between you and Captain Wybrow, and I feel sure she is getting jealous of you. Pray be very careful, Caterina, and try to behave with politeness and indifference to him. You must see by this time that he is not worth the feeling you have given him. He's more disturbed at his pulse beating one too many in a minute, than at all the misery he has caused you by his foolish trifling."

"You ought not to speak so of him, Maynard," said Caterina, passionately. "He is not what you think. He *did* care for me; he *did* love me; only he wanted to do what his uncle wished."

"Oh, to be sure! I know it is only from the most virtuous motives that he does what is convenient to himself."

Mr. Gilfil paused. He felt that he was getting irritated, and defeating his own object. Presently he continued in a calm and affectionate tone.

"I will say no more about what I think of him, Caterina. But whether he loved you or not, his position now with Miss

Assher is such that any love you may cherish for him can bring nothing but misery. God knows, I don't expect you to leave off loving him at a moment's notice. Time and absence, and trying to do what is right, are the only cures. If it were not that Sir Christopher and Lady Cheverel would be displeased and puzzled at your wishing to leave home just now, I would beg you to pay a visit to my sister. She and her husband are good creatures, and would make their house a home to you. But I could not urge the thing just now without giving a special reason; and what is most of all to be dreaded is the raising of any suspicion in Sir Christopher's mind of what has happened in the past, or of your present feelings. You think so too, don't you, Tina?"

Mr. Gilfil paused again, but Caterina said nothing. She was looking away from him, out of the window, and her eyes were filling with tears. He rose, and, advancing a little towards her, held out his hand and said —

"Forgive me, Caterina, for intruding on your feelings in this way. I was so afraid you might not be aware how Miss Assher watched you. Remember, I entreat you, that the peace of the whole family depends on your power of governing yourself. Only say you forgive me before I go."

"Dear, good Maynard," she said, stretching out her little hand, and taking two of his large fingers in her grasp, while her tears flowed fast; "I am very cross to you. But my heart is breaking. I don't know what I do. Good-by."

He stooped down, kissed the little hand, and then left the room.

"The cursed scoundrel!" he muttered between his teeth, as he closed the door behind him. "If it were not for Sir Christopher, I should like to pound him into paste to poison puppies like himself!"

CHAPTER X.

THAT evening Captain Wybrow, returning from a long ride with Miss Assher, went up to his dressing-room, and seated himself with an air of considerable lassitude before his mirror. The reflection there presented of his exquisite self was certainly paler and more worn than usual, and might excuse the anxiety with which he first felt his pulse, and then laid his hand on his heart.

"It 's a devil of a position this for a man to be in," was the train of his thought, as he kept his eyes fixed on the glass, while he leaned back in his chair, and crossed his hands behind his head; "between two jealous women, and both of them as ready to take fire as tinder. And in my state of health, too! I should be glad enough to run away from the whole affair, and go off to some lotus-eating place or other where there are no women, or only women who are too sleepy to be jealous. Here am I, doing nothing to please myself, trying to do the best thing for everybody else, and all the comfort I get is to have fire shot at me from women's eyes, and venom spirted at me from women's tongues. If Beatrice takes another jealous fit into her head — and it 's likely enough, Tina is so unmanageable — I don't know what storm she may raise. And any hitch in this marriage, especially of that sort, might be a fatal business for the old gentleman. I would n't have such a blow fall upon him for a great deal. Besides, a man must be married some time in his life, and I could hardly do better than marry Beatrice. She 's an uncommonly fine woman, and I 'm really very fond of her; and as I shall let her have her own way, her temper won't signify much. I wish the wedding was over and done with, for this fuss does n't suit me at all. I have n't been half so well lately. That scene about Tina this morning quite upset me. Poor little Tina! What a little simpleton it was, to set her heart on

me in that way! But she ought to see how impossible it is that things should be different. If she would but understand how kindly I feel towards her, and make up her mind to look on me as a friend; — but that is what one never can get a woman to do. Beatrice is very good-natured; I 'm sure she would be kind to the little thing. It would be a great comfort if Tina would take to Gilfil, if it were only in anger against me. He 'd make her a capital husband, and I should like to see the little grasshopper happy. If I had been in a different position, I would certainly have married her myself; but that was out of the question with my responsibilities to Sir Christopher. I think a little persuasion from my uncle would bring her to accept Gilfil; I know she would never be able to oppose my uncle's wishes. And if they were once married, she 's such a loving little thing, she would soon be billing and cooing with him as if she had never known me. It would certainly be the best thing for her happiness if that marriage were hastened. Heigho! Those are lucky fellows that have no women falling in love with them. It 's a confounded responsibility."

At this point in his meditations he turned his head a little, so as to get a three-quarter view of his face. Clearly it was the "*dono infelice della bellezza*" that laid these onerous duties upon him — an idea which naturally suggested that he should ring for his valet.

For the next few days, however, there was such a cessation of threatening symptoms as to allay the anxiety both of Captain Wybrow and Mr. Gilfil. All earthly things have their lull: even on nights when the most unappeasable wind is raging, there will be a moment of stillness before it crashes among the boughs again, and storms against the windows, and howls like a thousand lost demons through the key-holes.

Miss Assher appeared to be in the highest good-humor; Captain Wybrow was more assiduous than usual, and was very circumspect in his behavior to Caterina, on whom Miss Assher bestowed unwonted attentions. The weather was brilliant; there were riding excursions in the mornings and

dinner-parties in the evenings. Consultations in the library between Sir Christopher and Lady Assher seemed to be leading to a satisfactory result; and it was understood that this visit at Cheverel Manor would terminate in another fortnight, when the preparations for the wedding would be carried forward with all despatch at Farleigh. The Baronet seemed every day more radiant. Accustomed to view people who entered into his plans by the pleasant light which his own strong will and bright hopefulness were always casting on the future, he saw nothing but personal charms and promising domestic qualities in Miss Assher, whose quickness of eye and taste in externals formed a real ground of sympathy between her and Sir Christopher. Lady Cheverel's enthusiasm never rose above the temperate mark of calm satisfaction, and, having quite her share of the critical acumen which characterizes the mutual estimates of the fair sex, she had a more moderate opinion of Miss Assher's qualities. She suspected that the fair Beatrice had a sharp and imperious temper; and being herself, on principle and by habitual self-command, the most deferential of wives, she noticed with disapproval Miss Assher's occasional air of authority towards Captain Wybrow. A proud woman who has learned to submit, carries all her pride to the reinforcement of her submission, and looks down with severe superiority on all feminine assumption as "unbecoming." Lady Cheverel, however, confined her criticisms to the privacy of her own thoughts, and, with a reticence which I fear may seem incredible, did not use them as a means of disturbing her husband's complacency.

And Caterina? How did she pass these sunny autumn days, in which the skies seemed to be smiling on the family gladness? To her the change in Miss Assher's manner was unaccountable. Those compassionate attentions, those smiling condescensions, were torture to Caterina, who was constantly tempted to repulse them with anger. She thought, "Perhaps Anthony has told her to be kind to poor Tina." This was an insult. He ought to have known that the mere presence of Miss Assher was painful to her, that Miss Assher's smiles scorched her, that Miss Assher's kind words were like

poison stings inflaming her to madness. And he — Anthony — he was evidently repenting of the tenderness he had been betrayed into that morning in the drawing-room. He was cold and distant and civil to her, to ward off Beatrice's suspicions, and Beatrice could be so gracious now, because she was sure of Anthony's entire devotion. Well! and so it ought to be — and she ought not to wish it otherwise. And yet — oh, he *was* cruel to her. She could never have behaved so to him. To make her love him so — to speak such tender words — to give her such caresses, and then to behave as if such things had never been. He had given her the poison that seemed so sweet while she was drinking it, and now it was in her blood, and she was helpless.

With this tempest pent up in her bosom, the poor child went up to her room every night, and there it all burst forth. There, with loud whispers and sobs, restlessly pacing up and down, lying on the hard floor, courting cold and weariness, she told to the pitiful listening night the anguish which she could pour into no mortal ear. But always sleep came at last, and always in the morning the reactive calm that enabled her to live through the day.

It is amazing how long a young frame will go on battling with this sort of secret wretchedness, and yet show no traces of the conflict for any but sympathetic eyes. The very delicacy of Caterina's usual appearance, her natural paleness and habitually quiet mouse-like ways, made any symptoms of fatigue and suffering less noticeable. And her singing — the one thing in which she ceased to be passive, and became prominent — lost none of its energy. She herself sometimes wondered how it was that, whether she felt sad or angry, crushed with the sense of Anthony's indifference, or burning with impatience under Miss Assher's attentions, it was always a relief to her to sing. Those full deep notes she sent forth seemed to be lifting the pain from her heart — seemed to be carrying away the madness from her brain.

Thus Lady Cheverel noticed no change in Caterina, and it was only Mr. Gilfil who discerned with anxiety the feverish spot that sometimes rose on her cheek, the deepening violet

tint under her eyes, and the strange absent glance, the unhealthy glitter of the beautiful eyes themselves.

But those agitated nights were producing a more fatal effect than was represented by these slight outward changes.

CHAPTER XI.

The following Sunday, the morning being rainy, it was determined that the family should not go to Cumbermoor Church as usual, but that Mr. Gilfil, who had only an afternoon service at his curacy, should conduct the morning service in the chapel.

Just before the appointed hour of eleven, Caterina came down into the drawing-room, looking so unusually ill as to call forth an anxious inquiry from Lady Cheverel, who, on learning that she had a severe headache, insisted that she should not attend service, and at once packed her up comfortably on a sofa near the fire, putting a volume of Tillotson's Sermons into her hands — as appropriate reading, if Caterina should feel equal to that means of edification.

Excellent medicine for the mind are the good Archbishop's sermons, but a medicine, unhappily, not suited to Tina's case. She sat with the book open on her knees, her dark eyes fixed vacantly on the portrait of that handsome Lady Cheverel, wife of the notable Sir Anthony. She gazed at the picture without thinking of it, and the fair blond dame seemed to look down on her with that benignant unconcern, that mild wonder, with which happy self-possessed women are apt to look down on their agitated and weaker sisters.

Caterina was thinking of the near future — of the wedding that was soon to come — of all she would have to live through in the next months.

"I wish I could be very ill, and die before then," she

thought. "When people get very ill, they don't mind about things. Poor Patty Richards looked so happy when she was in a decline. She did n't seem to care any more about her lover that she was engaged to be married to, and she liked the smell of the flowers so, that I used to take her. Oh, if I could but like anything — if I could but think about anything else! If these dreadful feelings would go away, I would n't mind about not being happy. I would n't want anything — and I could do what would please Sir Christopher and Lady Cheverel. But when that rage and anger comes into me, I don't know what to do. I don't feel the ground under me; I only feel my head and heart beating, and it seems as if I must do something dreadful. Oh! I wonder if any one ever felt like me before. I must be very wicked. But God will have pity on me; He knows all I have to bear."

In this way the time wore on till Tina heard the sound of voices along the passage, and became conscious that the volume of Tillotson had slipped on the floor. She had only just picked it up, and seen with alarm that the pages were bent, when Lady Assher, Beatrice, and Captain Wybrow entered, all with that brisk and cheerful air which a sermon is often observed to produce when it is quite finished.

Lady Assher at once came and seated herself by Caterina. Her ladyship had been considerably refreshed by a doze, and was in great force for monologue.

"Well, my dear Miss Sarti, and how do you feel now? — a little better, I see. I thought you would be, sitting quietly here. These headaches, now, are all from weakness. You must not over-exert yourself, and you must take bitters. I used to have just the same sort of headaches when I was your age, and old Dr. Samson used to say to my mother, 'Madam, what your daughter suffers from is weakness.' He was such a curious old man, was Dr. Samson. But I wish you could have heard the sermon this morning. Such an excellent sermon! It was about the ten virgins: five of them were foolish, and five were clever, you know; and Mr. Gilfil explained all that. What a very pleasant young man he is! so very quiet and agreeable, and such a good hand at whist. I wish we had him

at Farleigh. Sir John would have liked him beyond anything; he is so good-tempered at cards, and he was such a man for cards, was Sir John. And our rector is a very irritable man; he can't bear to lose his money at cards. I don't think a clergyman ought to mind about losing his money; do you? — do you now?"

"Oh, pray, Lady Assher," interposed Beatrice, in her usual tone of superiority, "do not weary poor Caterina with such uninteresting questions. Your head seems very bad still, dear," she continued, in a condoling tone, to Caterina; "do take my vinaigrette, and keep it in your pocket. It will perhaps refresh you now and then."

"No, thank you," answered Caterina; "I will not take it away from you."

"Indeed, dear, I never use it; you must take it," Miss Assher persisted, holding it close to Tina's hand. Tina colored deeply, pushed the vinaigrette away with some impatience, and said, "Thank you, I never use those things. I don't like vinaigrettes."

Miss Assher returned the vinaigrette to her pocket in surprise and haughty silence, and Captain Wybrow, who had looked on in some alarm, said hastily, "See! it is quite bright out of doors now. There is time for a walk before luncheon. Come, Beatrice, put on your hat and cloak, and let us have half an hour's walk on the gravel."

"Yes, do, my dear," said Lady Assher, "and I will go and see if Sir Christopher is having his walk in the gallery."

As soon as the door had closed behind the two ladies, Captain Wybrow, standing with his back to the fire, turned towards Caterina, and said in a tone of earnest remonstrance, "My dear Caterina, let me beg of you to exercise more control over your feelings; you are really rude to Miss Assher, and I can see that she is quite hurt. Consider how strange your behavior must appear to her. She will wonder what can be the cause of it. Come, dear Tina," he added, approaching her, and attempting to take her hand; "for your own sake let me entreat you to receive her attentions politely. She really feels very kindly towards you, and I should be so happy to see you friends."

Caterina was already in such a state of diseased susceptibility that the most innocent words from Captain Wybrow would have been irritating to her, as the whirr of the most delicate wing will afflict a nervous patient. But this tone of benevolent remonstrance was intolerable. He had inflicted a great and unrepented injury on her, and now he assumed an air of benevolence towards her. This was a new outrage. His profession of good-will was insolence.

Caterina snatched away her hand and said indignantly, "Leave me to myself, Captain Wybrow! I do not disturb you."

"Caterina, why will you be so violent — so unjust to me? It is for you that I feel anxious. Miss Assher has already noticed how strange your behavior is both to her and me, and it puts me into a very difficult position. What can I say to her?"

"Say?" Caterina burst forth with intense bitterness, rising, and moving towards the door; "say that I am a poor silly girl, and have fallen in love with you, and am jealous of her; but that you have never had any feeling but pity for me — you have never behaved with anything more than friendliness to me. Tell her that, and she will think all the better of you."

Tina uttered this as the bitterest sarcasm her ideas would furnish her with, not having the faintest suspicion that the sarcasm derived any of its bitterness from truth. Underneath all her sense of wrong, which was rather instinctive than reflective — underneath all the madness of her jealousy, and her ungovernable impulses of resentment and vindictiveness — underneath all this scorching passion there were still left some hidden crystal dews of trust, of self-reproof, of belief that Anthony was trying to do the right. Love had not all gone to feed the fires of hatred. Tina still trusted that Anthony felt more for her than he seemed to feel; she was still far from suspecting him of a wrong which a woman resents even more than inconstancy. And she threw out this taunt simply as the most intense expression she could find for the anger of the moment.

As she stood nearly in the middle of the room, her little

body trembling under the shock of passions too strong for it, her very lips pale, and her eyes gleaming, the door opened, and Miss Assher appeared, tall, blooming, and splendid, in her walking costume. As she entered, her face wore the smile appropriate to the exits and entrances of a young lady who feels that her presence is an interesting fact; but the next moment she looked at Caterina with grave surprise, and then threw a glance of angry suspicion at Captain Wybrow, who wore an air of weariness and vexation.

"Perhaps you are too much engaged to walk out, Captain Wybrow? I will go alone."

"No, no, I am coming," he answered, hurrying towards her, and leading her out of the room; leaving poor Caterina to feel all the reaction of shame and self-reproach after her outburst of passion.

CHAPTER XII.

"Pray, what is likely to be the next scene in the drama between you and Miss Sarti?" said Miss Assher to Captain Wybrow as soon as they were out on the gravel. "It would be agreeable to have some idea of what is coming."

Captain Wybrow was silent. He felt out of humor, wearied, annoyed. There come moments when one almost determines never again to oppose anything but dead silence to an angry woman. "Now then, confound it," he said to himself, "I'm going to be battered on the other flank." He looked resolutely at the horizon, with something more like a frown on his face than Beatrice had ever seen there.

After a pause of two or three minutes, she continued in a still haughtier tone, "I suppose you are aware, Captain Wybrow, that I expect an explanation of what I have just seen."

"I have no explanation, my dear Beatrice," he answered at

last, making a strong effort over himself, "except what I have already given you. I hoped you would never recur to the subject."

"Your explanation, however, is very far from satisfactory. I can only say that the airs Miss Sarti thinks herself entitled to put on towards you, are quite incompatible with your position as regards me. And her behavior to me is most insulting. I shall certainly not stay in the house under such circumstances, and mamma must state the reasons to Sir Christopher."

"Beatrice," said Captain Wybrow, his irritation giving way to alarm, "I beseech you to be patient, and exercise your good feelings in this affair. It is very painful, I know, but I am sure you would be grieved to injure poor Caterina — to bring down my uncle's anger upon her. Consider what a poor little dependent thing she is."

"It is very adroit of you to make these evasions, but do not suppose that they deceive me. Miss Sarti would never dare to behave to you as she does, if you had not flirted with her, or made love to her. I suppose she considers your engagement to me a breach of faith to her. I am much obliged to you, certainly, for making me Miss Sarti's rival. You have told me a falsehood, Captain Wybrow."

"Beatrice, I solemnly declare to you that Caterina is nothing more to me than a girl I naturally feel kindly to — as a favorite of my uncle's, and a nice little thing enough. I should be glad to see her married to Gilfil to-morrow; that 's a good proof that I 'm not in love with her, I should think. As to the past, I may have shown her little attentions, which she has exaggerated and misinterpreted. What man is not liable to that sort of thing?"

"But what can she found her behavior on? What had she been saying to you this morning to make her tremble and turn pale in that way?"

"Oh, I don't know. I just said something about her behaving peevishly. With that Italian blood of hers, there 's no knowing how she may take what one says. She 's a fierce little thing, though she seems so quiet generally."

"But she ought to be made to know how unbecoming and indelicate her conduct is. For my part, I wonder Lady Cheverel has not noticed her short answers and the airs she puts on."

"Let me beg of you, Beatrice, not to hint anything of the kind to Lady Cheverel. You must have observed how strict my aunt is. It never enters her head that a girl can be in love with a man who has not made her an offer."

"Well, I shall let Miss Sarti know myself that I have observed her conduct. It will be only a charity to her."

"Nay, dear, that will be doing nothing but harm. Caterina's temper is peculiar. The best thing you can do will be to leave her to herself as much as possible. It will all wear off. I 've no doubt she 'll be married to Gilfil before long. Girls' fancies are easily diverted from one object to another. By Jove, what a rate my heart is galloping at! These confounded palpitations get worse instead of better."

Thus ended the conversation, so far as it concerned Caterina, not without leaving a distinct resolution in Captain Wybrow's mind — a resolution carried into effect the next day, when he was in the library with Sir Christopher for the purpose of discussing some arrangements about the approaching marriage.

"By the bye," he said carelessly, when the business came to a pause, and he was sauntering round the room with his hands in his coat-pockets, surveying the backs of the books that lined the walls, "when is the wedding between Gilfil and Caterina to come off, sir? I 've a fellow-feeling for a poor devil so many fathoms deep in love as Maynard. Why should n't their marriage happen as soon as ours? I suppose he has come to an understanding with Tina?"

"Why," said Sir Christopher, "I did think of letting the thing be until old Crichley died; he can't hold out very long, poor fellow; and then Maynard might have entered into matrimony and the Rectory both at once. But, after all, that really is no good reason for waiting. There is no need for them to leave the Manor when they are married. The little monkey is quite old enough. It would be pretty to see her a matron, with a baby about the size of a kitten in her arms."

"I think that system of waiting is always bad. And if I can further any settlement you would like to make on Caterina, I shall be delighted to carry out your wishes."

"My dear boy, that's very good of you; but Maynard will have enough; and from what I know of him — and I know him well — I think he would rather provide for Caterina himself. However, now you have put this matter into my head, I begin to blame myself for not having thought of it before. I've been so wrapt up in Beatrice and you, you rascal, that I had really forgotten poor Maynard. And he's older than you — it's high time he was settled in life as a family man."

Sir Christopher paused, took snuff in a meditative manner, and presently said, more to himself than to Anthony, who was humming a tune at the far end of the room, "Yes, yes. It will be a capital plan to finish off all our family business at once."

Riding out with Miss Assher the same morning, Captain Wybrow mentioned to her incidentally, that Sir Christopher was anxious to bring about the wedding between Gilfil and Caterina as soon as possible, and that he, for his part, should do all he could to further the affair. It would be the best thing in the world for Tina, in whose welfare he was really interested.

With Sir Christopher there was never any long interval between purpose and execution. He made up his mind promptly, and he acted promptly. On rising from luncheon, he said to Mr. Gilfil, "Come with me into the library, Maynard. I want to have a word with you."

"Maynard, my boy," he began, as soon as they were seated, tapping his snuff-box, and looking radiant at the idea of the unexpected pleasure he was about to give, "why should n't we have two happy couples instead of one, before the autumn is over, eh?"

"Eh?" he repeated, after a moment's pause, lengthening out the monosyllable, taking a slow pinch, and looking up at Maynard with a sly smile.

"I'm not quite sure that I understand you, sir," answered Mr. Gilfil, who felt annoyed at the consciousness that he was turning pale

"Not understand me, you rogue? You know very well whose happiness lies nearest to my heart after Anthony's. You know you let me into your secrets long ago, so there's no confession to make. Tina's quite old enough to be a grave little wife now; and though the Rectory's not ready for you, that's no matter. My lady and I shall feel all the more comfortable for having you with us. We should miss our little singing-bird if we lost her all at once."

Mr. Gilfil felt himself in a painfully difficult position. He dreaded that Sir Christopher should surmise or discover the true state of Caterina's feelings, and yet he was obliged to make those feelings the ground of his reply.

"My dear sir," he at last said with some effort, "you will not suppose that I am not alive to your goodness — that I am not grateful for your fatherly interest in my happiness; but I fear that Caterina's feelings towards me are not such as to warrant the hope that she would accept a proposal of marriage from me."

"Have you ever asked her?"

"No, sir. But we often know these things too well without asking."

"Pooh, pooh! the little monkey *must* love you. Why, you were her first playfellow; and I remember she used to cry if you cut your finger. Besides, she has always silently admitted that you were her lover. You know I have always spoken of you to her in that light. I took it for granted you had settled the business between yourselves; so did Anthony. Anthony thinks she's in love with you, and he has young eyes, which are apt enough to see clearly in these matters. He was talking to me about it this morning, and pleased me very much by the friendly interest he showed in you and Tina."

The blood — more than was wanted — rushed back to Mr. Gilfil's face; he set his teeth and clenched his hands in the effort to repress a burst of indignation. Sir Christopher noticed the flush, but thought it indicated the fluctuation of hope and fear about Caterina. He went on —

"You're too modest by half, Maynard. A fellow who can take a five-barred gate as you can, ought not to be so faint-

nearted. If you can't speak to her yourself, leave me to talk to her."

"Sir Christopher," said poor Maynard earnestly, "I shall really feel it the greatest kindness you can possibly show me not to mention this subject to Caterina at present. I think such a proposal, made prematurely, might only alienate her from me."

Sir Christopher was getting a little displeased at this contradiction. His tone became a little sharper as he said, "Have you any grounds to state for this opinion, beyond your general notion that Tina is not enough in love with you?"

"I can state none beyond my own very strong impression that she does not love me well enough to marry me."

"Then I think that ground is worth nothing at all. I am tolerably correct in my judgment of people; and if I am not very much deceived in Tina, she looks forward to nothing else but to your being her husband. Leave me to manage the matter as I think best. You may rely on me that I shall do no harm to your cause, Maynard."

Mr. Gilfil, afraid to say more, yet wretched in the prospect of what might result from Sir Christopher's determination, quitted the library in a state of mingled indignation against Captain Wybrow, and distress for himself and Caterina. What would she think of him? She might suppose that *he* had instigated or sanctioned Sir Christopher's proceeding. He should perhaps not have an opportunity of speaking to her on the subject in time; he would write her a note, and carry it up to her room after the dressing-bell had rung. No; that would agitate her, and unfit her for appearing at dinner, and passing the evening calmly. He would defer it till bed-time. After prayers, he contrived to lead her back to the drawing-room, and to put a letter in her hand. She carried it up to her own room, wondering, and there read —

DEAR CATERINA, — Do not suspect for a moment that anything Sir Christopher may say to you about our marriage has been prompted by me. I have done all I dare do to dissuade him from urging the subject, and have only been prevented from speaking more strongly by the dread of provoking questions which I could not answer without

causing you fresh misery. I write this, both to prepare you for anything Sir Christopher may say, and to assure you — but I hope you already believe it — that your feelings are sacred to me. I would rather part with the dearest hope of my life than be the means of adding to your trouble.

It is Captain Wybrow who has prompted Sir Christopher to take up the subject at this moment. I tell you this, to save you from hearing it suddenly when you are with Sir Christopher. You see now what sort of stuff that dastard's heart is made of. Trust in me always, dearest Caterina, as — whatever may come — your faithful friend and brother,

MAYNARD GILFIL.

Caterina was at first too terribly stung by the words about Captain Wybrow to think of the difficulty which threatened her — to think either of what Sir Christopher would say to her, or of what she could say in reply. Bitter sense of injury, fierce resentment, left no room for fear. With the poisoned garment upon him, the victim writhes under the torture — he has no thought of the coming death.

Anthony could do this! — Of this there could be no explanation but the coolest contempt for her feelings, the basest sacrifice of all the consideration and tenderness he owed her to the ease of his position with Miss Assher. No. It was worse than that: it was deliberate, gratuitous cruelty. He wanted to show her how he despised her; he wanted to make her feel her folly in having ever believed that he loved her.

The last crystal drops of trust and tenderness, she thought, were dried up; all was parched, fiery hatred. Now she need no longer check her resentment by the fear of doing him an injustice; he *had* trifled with her, as Maynard had said; he *had* been reckless of her; and now he was base and cruel. She had cause enough for her bitterness and anger; they were not so wicked as they had seemed to her.

As these thoughts were hurrying after each other like so many sharp throbs of fevered pain, she shed no tear. She paced restlessly to and fro, as her habit was — her hands clenched, her eyes gleaming fiercely and wandering uneasily, as if in search of something on which she might throw herself like a tigress.

"If I could speak to him," she whispered, "and tell him I hate him, I despise him, I loathe him!"

Suddenly, as if a new thought had struck her, she drew a key from her pocket, and unlocking an inlaid desk where she stored up her keepsakes, took from it a small miniature. It was in a very slight gold frame, with a ring to it, as if intended to be worn on a chain; and under the glass at the back were two locks of hair, one dark and the other auburn, arranged in a fantastic knot. It was Anthony's secret present to her a year ago — a copy he had had made specially for her. For the last month she had not taken it from its hiding-place: there was no need to heighten the vividness of the past. But now she clutched it fiercely, and dashed it across the room against the bare hearthstone.

Will she crush it under her feet, and grind it under her high-heeled shoe, till every trace of those false cruel features is gone?

Ah, no! She rushed across the room; but when she saw the little treasure she had cherished so fondly, so often smothered with kisses, so often laid under her pillow, and remembered with the first return of consciousness in the morning — when she saw this one visible relic of the too happy past lying with the glass shivered, the hair fallen out, the thin ivory cracked, there was a revulsion of the over-strained feeling: relenting came, and she burst into tears.

Look at her stooping down to gather up her treasure, searching for the hair and replacing it, and then mournfully examining the crack that disfigures the once loved image. There is no glass now to guard either the hair or the portraits; but see how carefully she wraps delicate paper round it, and locks it up again in its old place. Poor child! God send the relenting may always come before the worst irrevocable deed!

This action had quieted her, and she sat down to read Maynard's letter again. She read it two or three times without seeming to take in the sense; her apprehension was dulled by the passion of the last hour, and she found it difficult to call up the ideas suggested by the words. At last she began to have a distinct conception of the impending interview with

Sir Christopher. The idea of displeasing the Baronet, of whom every one at the Manor stood in awe, frightened her so much that she thought it would be impossible to resist his wish. He believed that she loved Maynard; he had always spoken as if he were quite sure of it. How could she tell him he was deceived — and what if he were to ask her whether she loved anybody else? To have Sir Christopher looking angrily at her, was more than she could bear, even in imagination. He had always been so good to her! Then she began to think of the pain she might give him, and the more selfish distress of fear gave way to the distress of affection. Unselfish tears began to flow, and sorrowful gratitude to Sir Christopher helped to awaken her sensibility to Mr. Gilfil's tenderness and generosity.

"Dear, good Maynard! — what a poor return I make him! If I could but have loved him instead — but I can never love or care for anything again. My heart is broken."

CHAPTER XIII.

The next morning the dreaded moment came. Caterina, stupefied by the suffering of the previous night, with that dull mental aching which follows on acute anguish, was in Lady Cheverel's sitting-room, copying out some charity lists, when her ladyship came in, and said —

"Tina, Sir Christopher wants you; go down into the library."

She went down trembling. As soon as she entered, Sir Christopher, who was seated near his writing-table, said, "Now, little monkey, come and sit down by me; I have something to tell you."

Caterina took a footstool, and seated herself on it at the Baronet's feet. It was her habit to sit on these low stools,

and in this way she could hide her face better. She put her little arm round his leg, and leaned her cheek against his knee.

"Why, you seem out of spirits this morning, Tina. What's the matter, eh?"

"Nothing, Padroncello; only my head is bad."

"Poor monkey! Well, now, would n't it do the head good if I were to promise you a good husband, and smart little wedding-gowns, and by-and-by a house of your own, where you would be a little mistress, and Padroncello would come and see you sometimes?"

"Oh no, no! I should n't like ever to be married. Let me always stay with you!"

"Pooh, pooh, little simpleton. I shall get old and tiresome, and there will be Anthony's children putting your nose out of joint. You will want some one to love you best of all, and you must have children of your own to love. I can't have you withering away into an old maid. I hate old maids: they make me dismal to look at them. I never see Sharp without shuddering. My little black-eyed monkey was never meant for anything so ugly. And there 's Maynard Gilfil the best man in the county, worth his weight in gold, heavy as he is; he loves you better than his eyes. And you love him too, you silly monkey, whatever you may say about not being married."

"No, no, dear Padroncello, do not say so; I could not marry him."

"Why not, you foolish child? You don't know your own mind. Why, it is plain to everybody that you love him. My lady has all along said she was sure you loved him — she has seen what little princess airs you put on to him; and Anthony too, *he* thinks you are in love with Gilfil. Come, what has made you take it into your head that you would n't like to marry him?"

Caterina was now sobbing too deeply to make any answer Sir Christopher patted her on the back and said, "Come, come; why, Tina, you are not well this morning. Go and rest, little one. You will see things in quite another light

when you are well. Think over what I have said, and remember there is nothing, after Anthony's marriage, that I have set my heart on so much as seeing you and Maynard settled for life. I must have no whims and follies — no nonsense." This was said with a slight severity; but he presently added, in a soothing tone, "There, there, stop crying, and be a good little monkey. Go and lie down and get to sleep."

Caterina slipped from the stool on to her knees, took the old Baronet's hand, covered it with tears and kisses, and then ran out of the room.

Before the evening, Captain Wybrow had heard from his uncle the result of the interview with Caterina. He thought, "If I could have a long quiet talk with her, I could perhaps persuade her to look more reasonably at things. But there 's no speaking to her in the house without being interrupted, and I can hardly see her anywhere else without Beatrice's finding it out." At last he determined to make it a matter of confidence with Miss Assher — to tell her that he wished to talk to Caterina quietly for the sake of bringing her to a calmer state of mind, and persuade her to listen to Gilfil's affection. He was very much pleased with this judicious and candid plan, and in the course of the evening he had arranged with himself the time and place of meeting, and had communicated his purpose to Miss Assher, who gave her entire approval. Anthony, she thought, would do well to speak plainly and seriously to Miss Sarti. He was really very patient and kind to her, considering how she behaved.

Tina had kept her room all that day, and had been carefully tended as an invalid, Sir Christopher having told her ladyship how matters stood. This tendance was so irksome to Caterina, she felt so uneasy under attentions and kindness that were based on a misconception, that she exerted herself to appear at breakfast the next morning, and declared herself well, though head and heart were throbbing. To be confined in her own room was intolerable; it was wretched enough to be looked at and spoken to, but it was more wretched to be left alone. She was frightened at her own sensations: she was frightened at the imperious vividness with which pictures of the past and

future thrust themselves on her imagination. And there was another feeling, too, which made her want to be down-stairs and moving about. Perhaps she might have an opportunity of speaking to Captain Wybrow alone — of speaking those words of hatred and scorn that burned on her tongue. That opportunity offered itself in a very unexpected manner.

Lady Cheverel having sent Caterina out of the drawing-room to fetch some patterns of embroidery from her sitting-room, Captain Wybrow presently walked out after her, and met her as she was returning down-stairs.

"Caterina," he said, laying his hand on her arm as she was hurrying on without looking at him, "will you meet me in the Rookery at twelve o'clock? I must speak to you, and we shall be in privacy there. I cannot speak to you in the house."

To his surprise, there was a flash of pleasure across her face; she answered shortly and decidedly, "Yes," then snatched her arm away from him, and passed down-stairs.

Miss Assher was this morning busy winding silks, being bent on emulating Lady Cheverel's embroidery, and Lady Assher chose the passive amusement of holding the skeins. Lady Cheverel had now all her working apparatus about her, and Caterina, thinking she was not wanted, went away and sat down to the harpsichord in the sitting-room. It seemed as if playing massive chords — bringing out volumes of sound, would be the easiest way of passing the long feverish moments before twelve o'clock. Handel's "Messiah" stood open on the desk, at the chorus, "All we like sheep," and Caterina threw herself at once into the impetuous intricacies of that magnificent fugue. In her happiest moments she could never have played it so well; for now all the passion that made her misery was hurled by a convulsive effort into her music, just as pain gives new force to the clutch of the sinking wrestler, and as terror gives far-sounding intensity to the shriek of the feeble.

But at half-past eleven she was interrupted by Lady Cheverel, who said, "Tina, go down, will you, and hold Miss Assher's silks for her. Lady Assher and I have decided on having our drive before luncheon."

Caterina went down, wondering how she should escape from the drawing-room in time to be in the Rookery at twelve. Nothing should prevent her from going; nothing should rob her of this one precious moment — perhaps the last — when she could speak out the thoughts that were in her. After that, she would be passive; she would bear anything.

But she had scarcely sat down with a skein of yellow silk on her hands, when Miss Assher said, graciously —

"I know you have an engagement with Captain Wybrow this morning. You must not let me detain you beyond the time."

"So he has been talking to her about me," thought Caterina. Her hands began to tremble as she held the skein.

Miss Assher continued, in the same gracious tone: "It is tedious work holding these skeins. I am sure I am very much obliged to you."

"No, you are not obliged to me," said Caterina, completely mastered by her irritation; "I have only done it because Lady Cheverel told me."

The moment was come when Miss Assher could no longer suppress her long latent desire to "let Miss Sarti know the impropriety of her conduct." With the malicious anger that assumes the tone of compassion, she said —

"Miss Sarti, I am really sorry for you, that you are not able to control yourself better. This giving way to unwarrantable feelings is lowering you — it is indeed."

"What unwarrantable feelings?" said Caterina, letting her hands fall, and fixing her great dark eyes steadily on Miss Assher.

"It is quite unnecessary for me to say more. You must be conscious what I mean. Only summon a sense of duty to your aid. You are paining Captain Wybrow extremely by your want of self-control."

"Did he tell you I pained him?"

"Yes, indeed, he did. He is very much hurt that you should behave to me as if you had a sort of enmity towards me. He would like you to make a friend of me. I assure you we both feel very kindly towards you, and are sorry you should cherish such feelings."

"He is very good," said Caterina, bitterly. "What feelings did he say I cherished?"

This bitter tone increased Miss Assher's irritation. There was still a lurking suspicion in her mind, though she would not admit it to herself, that Captain Wybrow had told her a falsehood about his conduct and feelings towards Caterina. It was this suspicion, more even than the anger of the moment, which urged her to say something that would test the truth of his statement. That she would be humiliating Caterina at the same time was only an additional temptation.

"These are things I do not like to talk of, Miss Sarti. I cannot even understand how a woman can indulge a passion for a man who has never given her the least ground for it, as Captain Wybrow assures me is the case."

"He told you that, did he?" said Caterina, in clear low tones, her lips turning white as she rose from her chair.

"Yes, indeed, he did. He was bound to tell it me after your strange behavior."

Caterina said nothing, but turned round suddenly and left the room.

See how she rushes noiselessly, like a pale meteor, along the passages and up the gallery stairs! Those gleaming eyes, those bloodless lips, that swift silent tread, make her look like the incarnation of a fierce purpose, rather than a woman. The mid-day sun is shining on the armor in the gallery, making mimic suns on bossed sword-hilts and the angles of polished breastplates. Yes, there are sharp weapons in the gallery. There is a dagger in that cabinet; she knows it well. And as a dragon-fly wheels in its flight to alight for an instant on a leaf, she darts to the cabinet, takes out the dagger, and thrusts it into her pocket. In three minutes more she is out, in hat and cloak, on the gravel-walk, hurrying along towards the thick shades of the distant Rookery. She threads the windings of the plantations, not feeling the golden leaves that rain upon her, not feeling the earth beneath her feet. Her hand is in her pocket, clenching the handle of the dagger, which she holds half out of its sheath.

She has reached the Rookery, and is under the gloom of the

interlacing boughs. Her heart throbs as if it would burst her bosom — as if every next leap must be its last. Wait, wait, O heart! — till she has done this one deed. He will be there — he will be before her in a moment. He will come towards her with that false smile, thinking she does not know his baseness — she will plunge that dagger into his heart.

Poor child! poor child! she who used to cry to have the fish put back into the water — who never willingly killed the smallest living thing — dreams now, in the madness of her passion, that she can kill the man whose very voice unnerves her.

But what is that lying among the dank leaves on the path three yards before her?

Good God! it is he — lying motionless — his hat fallen off. He is ill, then — he has fainted. Her hand lets go the dagger, and she rushes towards him. His eyes are fixed; he does not see her. She sinks down on her knees, takes the dear head in her arms, and kisses the cold forehead.

"Anthony, Anthony! speak to me — it is Tina — speak to me! O God, he is dead!"

CHAPTER XIV.

"Yes, Maynard," said Sir Christopher, chatting with Mr. Gilfil in the library, "it really is a remarkable thing that I never in my life laid a plan, and failed to carry it out. I lay my plans well, and I never swerve from them — that's it. A strong will is the only magic. And next to striking out one's plans, the pleasantest thing in the world is to see them well accomplished. This year, now, will be the happiest of my life, all but the year '53, when I came into possession of the Manor, and married Henrietta. The last touch is given to the old house; Anthony's marriage — the thing I had nearest my

heart — is settled to my entire satisfaction; and by-and-by you will be buying a little wedding-ring for Tina's finger. Don't shake your head in that forlorn way; — when I make prophecies they generally come to pass. But there's a quarter after twelve striking. I must be riding to the High Ash to meet Markham about felling some timber. My old oaks will have to groan for this wedding, but — "

The door burst open, and Caterina, ghastly and panting, her eyes distended with terror, rushed in, threw her arms round Sir Christopher's neck, and gasping out — "Anthony . . . the Rookery . . . dead . . . in the Rookery," fell fainting on the floor.

In a moment Sir Christopher was out of the room, and Mr. Gilfil was bending to raise Caterina in his arms. As he lifted her from the ground he felt something hard and heavy in her pocket. What could it be? The weight of it would be enough to hurt her as she lay. He carried her to the sofa, put his hand in her pocket, and drew forth the dagger.

Maynard shuddered. Did she mean to kill herself, then, or . . . or . . . a horrible suspicion forced itself upon him. "Dead — in the Rookery." He hated himself for the thought that prompted him to draw the dagger from its sheath. No! there was no trace of blood, and he was ready to kiss the good steel for its innocence. He thrust the weapon into his own pocket; he would restore it as soon as possible to its well-known place in the gallery. Yet, why had Caterina taken this dagger? What was it that had happened in the Rookery? Was it only a delirious vision of hers?

He was afraid to ring — afraid to summon any one to Caterina's assistance. What might she not say when she awoke from this fainting-fit? She might be raving. He could not leave her, and yet he felt as if he were guilty for not following Sir Christopher to see what was the truth. It took but a moment to think and feel all this, but that moment seemed such a long agony to him that he began to reproach himself for letting it pass without seeking some means of reviving Caterina. Happily the decanter of water on Sir Christopher's table was untouched. He would at least try the effect of

throwing that water over her. She might revive without his needing to call any one else.

Meanwhile Sir Christopher was hurrying at his utmost speed towards the Rookery; his face, so lately bright and confident, now agitated by a vague dread. The deep alarmed bark of Rupert, who ran by his side, had struck the ear of Mr. Bates, then on his way homeward, as something unwonted, and, hastening in the direction of the sound, he met the Baronet just as he was approaching the entrance of the Rookery. Sir Christopher's look was enough. Mr. Bates said nothing, but hurried along by his side, while Rupert dashed forward among the dead leaves with his nose to the ground. They had scarcely lost sight of him a minute when a change in the tone of his bark told them that he had found something, and in another instant he was leaping back over one of the large planted mounds. They turned aside to ascend the mound, Rupert leading them; the tumultuous cawing of the rooks, the very rustling of the leaves, as their feet plunged among them, falling like an evil omen on the Baronet's ear.

They had reached the summit of the mound, and had begun to descend. Sir Christopher saw something purple down on the path below among the yellow leaves. Rupert was already beside it, but Sir Christopher could not move faster. A tremor had taken hold of the firm limbs. Rupert came back and licked the trembling hand, as if to say "Courage!" and then was down again snuffing the body. Yes, it was a body . . . Anthony's body. There was the white hand with its diamond ring clutching the dark leaves. His eyes were half open, but did not heed the gleam of sunlight that darted itself directly on them from between the boughs.

Still he might only have fainted; it might only be a fit. Sir Christopher knelt down, unfastened the cravat, unfastened the waistcoat, and laid his hand on the heart. It might be syncope; it might not — it could not be death. No! that thought must be kept far off.

"Go, Bates, get help; we 'll carry him to your cottage. Send some one to the house to tell Mr. Gilfil and Warren.

Bid them send off for Doctor Hart, and break it to my lady and Miss Assher that Anthony is ill."

Mr. Bates hastened away, and the Baronet was left alone kneeling beside the body. The young and supple limbs, the rounded cheeks, the delicate ripe lips, the smooth white hands, were lying cold and rigid; and the aged face was bending over them in silent anguish; the aged deep-veined hands were seeking with tremulous inquiring touches for some symptom that life was not irrevocably gone.

Rupert was there too, waiting and watching; licking first the dead and then the living hands; then running off on Mr. Bates's track as if he would follow and hasten his return, but in a moment turning back again, unable to quit the scene of his master's sorrow.

CHAPTER XV.

It is a wonderful moment, the first time we stand by one who has fainted, and witness the fresh birth of consciousness spreading itself over the blank features, like the rising sunlight on the alpine summits that lay ghastly and dead under the leaden twilight. A slight shudder, and the frost-bound eyes recover their liquid light; for an instant they show the inward semi-consciousness of an infant's; then, with a little start, they open wider and begin to *look;* the present is visible, but only as a strange writing, and the interpreter Memory is not yet there.

Mr. Gilfil felt a trembling joy as this change passed over Caterina's face. He bent over her, rubbing her chill hands, and looking at her with tender pity as her dark eyes opened on him wonderingly. He thought there might be some wine in the dining-room close by. He left the room, and Caterina's eyes turned towards the window — towards Sir Christopher's chair. *There* was the link at which the chain of consciousness

had snapped, and the events of the morning were beginning to recur dimly like a half-remembered dream, when Maynard returned with some wine. He raised her, and she drank it; but still she was silent, seeming lost in the attempt to recover the past, when the door opened, and Mr. Warren appeared with looks that announced terrible tidings. Mr. Gilfil, dreading lest he should tell them in Caterina's presence, hurried towards him with his finger on his lips, and drew him away into the dining-room on the opposite side of the passage.

Caterina, revived by the stimulant, was now recovering the full consciousness of the scene in the Rookery. Anthony was lying there dead; she had left him to tell Sir Christopher; she must go and see what they were doing with him; perhaps he was not really dead — only in a trance; people did fall into trances sometimes. While Mr. Gilfil was telling Warren how it would be best to break the news to Lady Cheverel and Miss Assher, anxious himself to return to Caterina, the poor child had made her way feebly to the great entrance-door, which stood open. Her strength increased as she moved and breathed the fresh air, and with every increase of strength came increased vividness of emotion, increased yearning to be where her thought was — in the Rookery with Anthony. She walked more and more swiftly, and at last, gathering the artificial strength of passionate excitement, began to run.

But now she heard the tread of heavy steps, and under the yellow shade near the wooden bridge she saw men slowly carrying something. Soon she was face to face with them. Anthony was no longer in the Rookery: they were carrying him stretched on a door, and there behind him was Sir Christopher, with the firmly set mouth, the deathly paleness, and the concentrated expression of suffering in the eye, which mark the suppressed grief of the strong man. The sight of this face, on which Caterina had never before beheld the signs of anguish, caused a rush of new feeling which for the moment submerged all the rest. She went gently up to him, put her little hand in his, and walked in silence by his side. Sir Christopher could not tell her to leave him, and so she went on with that sad procession to Mr. Bates's cottage in the Mosslands, and sat

there in silence, waiting and watching to know if Anthony were really dead.

She had not yet missed the dagger from her pocket; she had not yet even thought of it. At the sight of Anthony lying dead, her nature had rebounded from its new bias of resentment and hatred to the old sweet habit of love. The earliest and the longest has still the mastery over us; and the only past that linked itself with those glazed unconscious eyes, was the past when they beamed on her with tenderness. She forgot the interval of wrong and jealousy and hatred — all his cruelty, and all her thoughts of revenge — as the exile forgets the stormy passage that lay between home and happiness and the dreary land in which he finds himself desolate.

CHAPTER XVI.

Before night all hope was gone. Dr. Hart had said it was death; Anthony's body had been carried to the house, and every one there knew the calamity that had fallen on them.

Caterina had been questioned by Dr. Hart, and had answered briefly that she found Anthony lying in the Rookery. That she should have been walking there just at that time was not a coincidence to raise conjectures in any one besides Mr. Gilfil. Except in answering this question, she had not broken her silence. She sat mute in a corner of the gardener's kitchen, shaking her head when Maynard entreated her to return with him, and apparently unable to think of anything but the possibility that Anthony might revive, until she saw them carrying away the body to the house. Then she followed by Sir Christopher's side again, so quietly, that even Dr. Hart did not object to her presence.

It was decided to lay the body in the library until after the coroner's inquest to-morrow; and when Caterina saw the door

finally closed, she turned up the gallery stairs on her way to her own room, the place where she felt at home with her sorrows. It was the first time she had been in the gallery since that terrible moment in the morning, and now the spot and the objects around began to reawaken her half-stunned memory. The armor was no longer glittering in the sunlight, but there it hung dead and sombre above the cabinet from which she had taken the dagger. Yes! now it all came back to her — all the wretchedness and all the sin. But where was the dagger now? She felt in her pocket; it was not there. Could it have been her fancy — all that about the dagger? She looked in the cabinet; it was not there. Alas! no; it could not have been her fancy, and she *was* guilty of that wickedness. But where could the dagger be now? Could it have fallen out of her pocket? She heard steps ascending the stairs, and hurried on to her room, where, kneeling by the bed, and burying her face to shut out the hateful light, she tried to recall every feeling and incident of the morning.

It all came back; everything Anthony had done, and everything she had felt for the last month — for many months — ever since that June evening when he had last spoken to her in the gallery. She looked back on her storms of passion, her jealousy and hatred of Miss Assher, her thoughts of revenge on Anthony. Oh, how wicked she had been! It was she who had been sinning; it was she who had driven him to do and say those things that had made her so angry. And if he had wronged her, what had she been on the verge of doing to him? She was too wicked ever to be pardoned. She would like to confess how wicked she had been, that they might punish her; she would like to humble herself to the dust before every one — before Miss Assher even. Sir Christopher would send her away — would never see her again, if he knew all; and she would be happier to be punished and frowned on, than to be treated tenderly while she had that guilty secret in her breast. But then, if Sir Christopher were to know all, it would add to his sorrow, and make him more wretched than ever. No! she could not confess it — she should have to tell about Anthony. But she could not stay at the Manor; she must go away; she

could not bear Sir Christopher's eye, could not bear the sight of all these things that reminded her of Anthony and of her sin. Perhaps she should die soon; she felt very feeble; there could not be much life in her. She would go away and live humbly, and pray to God to pardon her, and let her die.

The poor child never thought of suicide. No sooner was the storm of anger passed than the tenderness and timidity of her nature returned, and she could do nothing but love and mourn. Her inexperience prevented her from imagining the consequences of her disappearance from the Manor; she foresaw none of the terrible details of alarm and distress and search that must ensue. "They will think I am dead," she said to herself, "and by-and-by they will forget me, and Maynard will get happy again, and love some one else."

She was roused from her absorption by a knock at the door. Mrs. Bellamy was there. She had come by Mr. Gilfil's request to see how Miss Sarti was, and to bring her some food and wine.

"You look sadly, my dear," said the old housekeeper, "an' you 're all of a quake wi' cold. Get you to bed, now do. Martha shall come an' warm it, an' light your fire. See now, here 's some nice arrowroot, wi' a drop o' wine in it. Take that, an' it 'll warm you. I must go down again, for I can't awhile to stay. There 's so many things to see to; an' Miss Assher 's in hysterics constant, an' her maid 's ill i' bed — a poor creachy thing — an' Mrs. Sharp 's wanted every minute. But I 'll send Martha up, an' do you get ready to go to bed, there 's a dear child, an' take care o' yourself."

"Thank you, dear mammy," said Tina, kissing the little old woman's wrinkled cheek; "I shall eat the arrowroot, and don't trouble about me any more to-night. I shall do very well when Martha has lighted my fire. Tell Mr. Gilfil I 'm better. I shall go to bed by-and-by, so don't you come up again, because you may only disturb me."

"Well, well, take care o' yourself, there 's a good child, an' God send you may sleep."

Caterina took the arrowroot quite eagerly, while Martha was lighting her fire. She wanted to get strength for her

journey, and she kept the plate of biscuits by her that she might put some in her pocket. Her whole mind was now bent on going away from the Manor, and she was thinking of all the ways and means her little life's experience could suggest.

It was dusk now; she must wait till early dawn, for she was too timid to go away in the dark, but she must make her escape before any one was up in the house. There would be people watching Anthony in the library, but she could make her way out of a small door leading into the garden, against the drawing-room on the other side of the house.

She laid her cloak, bonnet, and veil ready; then she lighted a candle, opened her desk, and took out the broken portrait wrapped in paper. She folded it again in two little notes of Anthony's, written in pencil, and placed it in her bosom. There was the little china box, too — Dorcas's present, the pearl earrings, and a silk purse, with fifteen seven-shilling pieces in it, the presents Sir Christopher had made her on her birthday, ever since she had been at the Manor. Should she take the earrings and the seven-shilling pieces? She could not bear to part with them; it seemed as if they had some of Sir Christopher's love in them. She would like them to be buried with her. She fastened the little round earrings in her ears, and put the purse with Dorcas's box in her pocket. She had another purse there, and she took it out to count her money, for she would never spend her seven-shilling pieces. She had a guinea and eight shillings; that would be plenty.

So now she sat down to wait for the morning, afraid to lay herself on the bed lest she should sleep too long. If she could but see Anthony once more and kiss his cold forehead! But that could not be. She did not deserve it. She must go away from him, away from Sir Christopher, and Lady Cheverel, and Maynard, and everybody who had been kind to her, and thought her good while she was so wicked.

CHAPTER XVII.

Some of Mrs. Sharp's earliest thoughts, the next morning, were given to Caterina, whom she had not been able to visit the evening before, and whom, from a nearly equal mixture of affection and self-importance, she did not at all like resigning to Mrs. Bellamy's care. At half-past eight o'clock she went up to Tina's room, bent on benevolent dictation as to doses and diet and lying in bed. But on opening the door she found the bed smooth and empty. Evidently it had not been slept in. What could this mean? Had she sat up all night, and was she gone out to walk? The poor thing's head might be touched by what had happened yesterday; it was such a shock —finding Captain Wybrow in that way; she was perhaps gone out of her mind. Mrs. Sharp looked anxiously in the place where Tina kept her hat and cloak; they were not there, so that she had had at least the presence of mind to put them on. Still the good woman felt greatly alarmed, and hastened away to tell Mr. Gilfil, who, she knew, was in his study.

"Mr. Gilfil," she said, as soon as she had closed the door behind her, "my mind misgives me dreadful about Miss Sarti."

"What is it?" said poor Maynard, with a horrible fear that Caterina had betrayed something about the dagger.

"She 's not in her room, an' her bed 's not been slept in this night, an' her hat an' cloak 's gone."

For a minute or two Mr. Gilfil was unable to speak. He felt sure the worst had come: Caterina had destroyed herself. The strong man suddenly looked so ill and helpless that Mrs. Sharp began to be frightened at the effect of her abruptness.

"Oh, sir, I 'm grieved to my heart to shock you so: but I did n't know who else to go to."

"No, no, you were quite right."

He gathered some strength from his very despair. It was

all over, and he had nothing now to do but to suffer and to help the suffering. He went on in a firmer voice —

"Be sure not to breathe a word about it to any one. We must not alarm Lady Cheverel and Sir Christopher. Miss Sarti may be only walking in the garden. She was terribly excited by what she saw yesterday, and perhaps was unable to lie down from restlessness. Just go quietly through the empty rooms, and see whether she is in the house. I will go and look for her in the grounds."

He went down, and, to avoid giving any alarm in the house, walked at once towards the Mosslands in search of Mr. Bates, whom he met returning from his breakfast. To the gardener he confided his fear about Caterina, assigning as a reason for this fear the probability that the shock she had undergone yesterday had unhinged her mind, and begging him to send men in search of her through the gardens and park, and inquire if she had been seen at the lodges; and if she were not found or heard of in this way, to lose no time in dragging the waters round the Manor.

"God forbid it should be so, Bates, but we shall be the easier for having searched everywhere."

"Troost to mae, troost to mae, Mr. Gilfil. Eh! but I 'd ha' worked for day-wage all the rest o' my life, rether than anythin' should ha' happened to her."

The good gardener, in deep distress, strode away to the stables that he might send the grooms on horseback through the park.

Mr. Gilfil's next thought was to search the Rookery: she might be haunting the scene of Captain Wybrow's death. He went hastily over every mound, looked round every large tree, and followed every winding of the walks. In reality he had little hope of finding her there; but the bare possibility fenced off for a time the fatal conviction that Caterina's body would be found in the water. When the Rookery had been searched in vain, he walked fast to the border of the little stream that bounded one side of the grounds. The stream was almost everywhere hidden among trees, and there was one place where it was broader and deeper than elsewhere — she would be more

likely to come to that spot than to the pool. He hurried along with strained eyes, his imagination continually creating what he dreaded to see.

There is something white behind that overhanging bough. His knees tremble under him. He seems to see part of her dress caught on a branch, and her dear dead face upturned. O God, give strength to thy creature, on whom thou hast laid this great agony! He is nearly up to the bough, and the white object is moving. It is a waterfowl, that spreads its wings and flies away screaming. He hardly knows whether it is a relief or a disappointment that she is not there. The conviction that she is dead presses its cold weight upon him none the less heavily.

As he reached the great pool in front of the Manor, he saw Mr. Bates, with a group of men already there, preparing for the dreadful search which could only displace his vague despair by a definite horror; for the gardener, in his restless anxiety, had been unable to defer this until other means of search had proved vain. The pool was not now laughing with sparkles among the water-lilies. It looked black and cruel under the sombre sky, as if its cold depths held relentlessly all the murdered hope and joy of Maynard Gilfil's life.

Thoughts of the sad consequences for others as well as himself were crowding on his mind. The blinds and shutters were all closed in front of the Manor, and it was not likely that Sir Christopher would be aware of anything that was passing outside; but Mr. Gilfil felt that Caterina's disappearance could not long be concealed from him. The coroner's inquest would be held shortly; she would be inquired for, and then it would be inevitable that the Baronet should know all.

CHAPTER XVIII.

At twelve o'clock, when all search and inquiry had been in vain, and the coroner was expected every moment, Mr. Gilfil could no longer defer the hard duty of revealing this fresh calamity to Sir Christopher, who must otherwise have it discovered to him abruptly.

The Baronet was seated in his dressing-room, where the dark window-curtains were drawn so as to admit only a sombre light. It was the first time Mr. Gilfil had had an interview with him this morning, and he was struck to see how a single day and night of grief had aged the fine old man. The lines in his brow and about his mouth were deepened; his complexion looked dull and withered; there was a swollen ridge under his eyes; and the eyes themselves, which used to cast so keen a glance on the present, had the vacant expression which tells that vision is no longer a sense, but a memory.

He held out his hand to Maynard, who pressed it, and sat down beside him in silence. Sir Christopher's heart began to swell at this unspoken sympathy; the tears *would* rise, *would* roll in great drops down his cheeks. The first tears he had shed since boyhood were for Anthony.

Maynard felt as if his tongue were glued to the roof of his mouth. He could not speak first: he must wait until Sir Christopher said something which might lead on to the cruel words that must be spoken.

At last the Baronet mastered himself enough to say, "I 'm very weak, Maynard — God help me! I did n't think anything would unman me in this way; but I 'd built everything on that lad. Perhaps I've been wrong in not forgiving my sister. She lost one of *her* sons a little while ago. I've been too proud and obstinate."

"We can hardly learn humility and tenderness enough except by suffering," said Maynard; "and God sees we are in

need of suffering, for it is falling more and more heavily on us. We have a new trouble this morning."

"Tina?" said Sir Christopher, looking up anxiously — "is Tina ill?"

"I am in dreadful uncertainty about her. She was very much agitated yesterday — and with her delicate health — I am afraid to think what turn the agitation may have taken."

"Is she delirious, poor dear little one?"

"God only knows how she is. We are unable to find her. When Mrs. Sharp went up to her room this morning, it was empty. She had not been in bed. Her hat and cloak were gone. I have had search made for her everywhere — in the house and garden, in the park, and — in the water. No one has seen her since Martha went up to light her fire at seven o'clock in the evening."

While Mr. Gilfil was speaking, Sir Christopher's eyes, which were eagerly turned on him, recovered some of their old keenness, and some sudden painful emotion, as at a new thought, flitted rapidly across his already agitated face, like the shadow of a dark cloud over the waves. When the pause came, he laid his hand on Mr. Gilfil's arm, and said in a lower voice —

"Maynard, did that poor thing love Anthony?"

"She did."

Maynard hesitated after these words, struggling between his reluctance to inflict a yet deeper wound on Sir Christopher, and his determination that no injustice should be done to Caterina. Sir Christopher's eyes were still fixed on him in solemn inquiry, and his own sunk towards the ground, while he tried to find the words that would tell the truth least cruelly.

"You must not have any wrong thoughts about Tina," he said at length. "I must tell you now, for her sake, what nothing but this should ever have caused to pass my lips. Captain Wybrow won her affections by attentions which, in his position, he was bound not to show her. Before his marriage was talked of, he had behaved to her like a lover."

Sir Christopher relaxed his hold of Maynard's arm, and

looked away from him. He was silent for some minutes, evidently attempting to master himself, so as to be able to speak calmly.

"I must see Henrietta immediately," he said at last, with something of his old sharp decision; "she must know all; but we must keep it from every one else as far as possible. My dear boy," he continued in a kinder tone, "the heaviest burthen has fallen on you. But we may find her yet; we must not despair: there has not been time enough for us to be certain. Poor dear little one! God help me! I thought I saw everything, and was stone-blind all the while."

CHAPTER XIX.

The sad slow week was gone by at last. At the coroner's inquest a verdict of sudden death had been pronounced. Dr. Hart, acquainted with Captain Wybrow's previous state of health, had given his opinion that death had been imminent from long-established disease of the heart, though it had probably been accelerated by some unusual emotion. Miss Assher was the only person who positively knew the motive that had led Captain Wybrow to the Rookery; but she had not mentioned Caterina's name, and all painful details or inquiries were studiously kept from her. Mr. Gilfil and Sir Christopher, however, knew enough to conjecture that the fatal agitation was due to an appointed meeting with Caterina.

All search and inquiry after her had been fruitless, and were the more likely to be so because they were carried on under the prepossession that she had committed suicide. No one noticed the absence of the trifles she had taken from her desk; no one knew of the likeness, or that she had hoarded her seven-shilling pieces, and it was not remarkable that she should have happened to be wearing the pearl earrings. She

had left the house, they thought, taking nothing with her; it seemed impossible she could have gone far; and she must have been in a state of mental excitement, that made it too probable she had only gone to seek relief in death. The same places within three or four miles of the Manor were searched again and again — every pond, every ditch in the neighborhood was examined.

Sometimes Maynard thought that death might have come on unsought, from cold and exhaustion; and not a day passed but he wandered through the neighboring woods, turning up the heaps of dead leaves, as if it were possible her dear body could be hidden there. Then another horrible thought recurred, and before each night came he had been again through all the uninhabited rooms of the house, to satisfy himself once more that she was not hidden behind some cabinet, or door, or curtain — that he should not find her there with madness in her eyes, looking and looking, and yet not seeing him.

But at last those five long days and nights were at an end, the funeral was over, and the carriages were returning through the park. When they had set out, a heavy rain was falling; but now the clouds were breaking up, and a gleam of sunshine was sparkling among the dripping boughs under which they were passing. This gleam fell upon a man on horseback who was jogging slowly along, and whom Mr. Gilfil recognized, in spite of diminished rotundity, as Daniel Knott, the coachman who had married the rosy-cheeked Dorcas ten years before.

Every new incident suggested the same thought to Mr. Gilfil; and his eye no sooner fell on Knott than he said to himself, "Can he be come to tell us anything about Caterina?" Then he remembered that Caterina had been very fond of Dorcas, and that she always had some present ready to send her when Knott paid an occasional visit to the Manor. Could Tina have gone to Dorcas? But his heart sank again as he thought, very likely Knott had only come because he had heard of Captain Wybrow's death, and wanted to know how his old master had borne the blow.

As soon as the carriage reached the house, he went up to his study and walked about nervously, longing, but afraid, to go

down and speak to Knott, lest his faint hope should be dissipated. Any one looking at that face, usually so full of calm good-will, would have seen that the last week's suffering had left deep traces. By day he had been riding or wandering incessantly, either searching for Caterina himself, or directing inquiries to be made by others. By night he had not known sleep — only intermittent dozing, in which he seemed to be finding Caterina dead, and woke up with a start from this unreal agony to the real anguish of believing that he should see her no more. The clear gray eyes looked sunken and restless, the full careless lips had a strange tension about them, and the brow, formerly so smooth and open, was contracted as if with pain. He had not lost the object of a few months' passion; he had lost the being who was bound up with his power of loving, as the brook we played by or the flowers we gathered in childhood are bound up with our sense of beauty. Love meant nothing for him but to love Caterina. For years, the thought of her had been present in everything, like the air and the light; and now she was gone, it seemed as if all pleasure had lost its vehicle: the sky, the earth, the daily ride, the daily talk might be there, but the loveliness and the joy that were in them had gone forever.

Presently, as he still paced backwards and forwards. he heard steps along the corridor, and there was a knock at his door. His voice trembled as he said "Come in," and the rush of renewed hope was hardly distinguishable from pain when he saw Warren enter with Daniel Knott behind him.

"Knott is come, sir, with news of Miss Sarti. I thought it best to bring him to you first."

Mr. Gilfil could not help going up to the old coachman and wringing his hand; but he was unable to speak, and only motioned to him to take a chair, while Warren left the room. He hung upon Daniel's moon-face, and listened to his small piping voice, with the same solemn yearning expectation with which he would have given ear to the most awful messenger from the land of shades.

"It war Dorkis, sir, would hev me come; but we knowed nothin' o' what 's happened at the Manor. She 's frightened

out on her wits about Miss Sarti, an' she would hev me saddle Blackbird this mornin', an' leave the ploughin', to come an' let Sir Christifer an' my lady know. P'raps you 've heared, sir, we don't keep the Cross Keys at Sloppeter now; a uncle o' mine died three 'ear ago, an' left me a leggicy. He was bailiff to Squire Ramble, as hed them there big farms on his hans; an' so we took a little farm o' forty acres or thereabouts, becos Dorkis did n't like the public when she got moithered wi' children. As pritty a place as iver you see, sir, wi' water at the back convenent for the cattle."

"For God's sake," said Maynard, "tell me what it is about Miss Sarti. Don't stay to tell me anything else now."

"Well, sir," said Knott, rather frightened by the parson's vehemence, "she come t' our house i' the carrier's cart o' Wednesday, when it was welly nine o'clock at night; and Dorkis run out, for she heared the cart stop, an' Miss Sarti throwed her arms roun' Dorkis's neck an' says, 'Tek me in, Dorkis, tek me in,' an' went off into a swoond, like. An' Dorkis calls out to me, — 'Dannel,' she calls — an' I run out and carried the young miss in, an' she come roun' arter a bit, an' opened her eyes, and Dorkis got her to drink a spoonful o' rum-an'-water — we 've got some capital rum as we brought from the Cross Keys, and Dorkis won't let nobody drink it. She says she keeps it for sickness; but for my part, I think it 's a pity to drink good rum when your mouth 's out o' taste; you may just as well hev doctor's stuff. However, Dorkis got her to bed, an' there she 's lay iver sin', stoopid like, an' niver speaks, an' on'y teks little bits an' sups when Dorkis coaxes her. An' we begun to be frightened, and could n't think what had made her come away from the Manor, and Dorkis was afeared there was summat wrong. So this mornin' she could hold no longer, an' would hev no nay but I must come an' see; an' so I 've rode twenty mile upo' Blackbird, as thinks all the while he 's a-ploughin', an' turns sharp roun', every thirty yards, as if he was at the end of a furrow. I've hed a sore time wi' him, I can tell you, sir."

"God bless you, Knott, for coming!" said Mr. Gilfil, wringing the old coachman's hand again. "Now go down

and have something and rest yourself. You will stay here to-night, and by-and-by I shall come to you to learn the nearest way to your house. I shall get ready to ride there immediately, when I have spoken to Sir Christopher."

In an hour from that time Mr. Gilfil was galloping on a stout mare towards the little muddy village of Callam, five miles beyond Sloppeter. Once more he saw some gladness in the afternoon sunlight; once more it was a pleasure to see the hedgerow trees flying past him, and to be conscious of a "good seat" while his black Kitty bounded beneath him, and the air whistled to the rhythm of her pace. Caterina was not dead; he had found her; his love and tenderness and long-suffering seemed so strong, they must recall her to life and happiness. After that week of despair, the rebound was so violent that it carried his hopes at once as far as the utmost mark they had ever reached. Caterina would come to love him at last; she would be his. They had been carried through all that dark and weary way that she might know the depth of his love. How he would cherish her — his little bird with the timid bright eye, and the sweet throat that trembled with love and music! She would nestle against him, and the poor little breast which had been so ruffled and bruised should be safe forevermore. In the love of a brave and faithful man there is always a strain of maternal tenderness; he gives out again those beams of protecting fondness which were shed on him as he lay on his mother's knee.

It was twilight as he entered the village of Callam, and, asking a homeward-bound laborer the way to Daniel Knott's, learned that it was by the church, which showed its stumpy ivy-clad spire on a slight elevation of ground; a useful addition to the means of identifying that desirable homestead afforded by Daniel's description — "the prittiest place iver you see" — though a small cow-yard full of excellent manure, and leading right up to the door, without any frivolous interruption from garden or railing, might perhaps have been enough to make that description unmistakably specific.

Mr. Gilfil had no sooner reached the gate leading into the cow-yard, than he was descried by a flaxen-haired lad of nine,

prematurely invested with the *toga virilis*, or smock-frock, who ran forward to let in the unusual visitor. In a moment Dorcas was at the door, the roses on her cheeks apparently all the redder for the three pair of cheeks which formed a group round her, and for the very fat baby who stared in her arms, and sucked a long crust with calm relish.

"Is it Mr. Gilfil, sir?" said Dorcas, curtsying low as he made his way through the damp straw, after tying up his horse.

"Yes, Dorcas; I 'm grown out of your knowledge. How is Miss Sarti?"

"Just for all the world the same, sir, as I suppose Dannel 's told you; for I reckon you 've come from the Manor, though you 're come uncommon quick, to be sure."

"Yes, he got to the Manor about one o'clock, and I set off as soon as I could. She 's not worse, is she?"

"No change, sir, for better or wuss. Will you please to walk in, sir? She lies there takin' no notice o' nothin', no more nor a baby as is on'y a week old, an' looks at me as blank as if she did n't know me. Oh, what can it be, Mr. Gilfil? How come she to leave the Manor? How 's his honor an' my lady?"

"In great trouble, Dorcas. Captain Wybrow, Sir Christopher's nephew, you know, has died suddenly. Miss Sarti found him lying dead, and I think the shock has affected her mind."

"Eh, dear! that fine young gentleman as was to be th' heir, as Dannel told me about. I remember seein' him when he was a little un, a-visitin' at the Manor. Well-a-day, what a grief to his honor and my lady. But that poor Miss Tina — an' she found him a-lyin' dead? Oh dear, oh dear!"

Dorcas had led the way into the best kitchen, as charming a room as best kitchens used to be in farmhouses which had no parlors — the fire reflected in a bright row of pewter plates and dishes; the sand-scoured deal tables so clean you longed to stroke them; the salt-coffer in one chimney-corner, and a three-cornered chair in the other, the walls behind handsomely tapestried with flitches of bacon, and the ceiling ornamented with pendent hams.

"Sit ye down, sir — do," said Dorcas, moving the three-cornered chair, "an' let me get you somethin' after your long journey. Here, Becky, come an' tek the baby."

Becky, a red-armed damsel, emerged from the adjoining back-kitchen, and possessed herself of baby, whose feelings or fat made him conveniently apathetic under the transference.

"What 'll you please to tek, sir, as I can give you? I 'll get you a rasher o' bacon i' no time, an' I 've got some tea, or belike you 'd tek a glass o' rum-an'-water. I know we 've got nothin' as you 're used t' eat and drink; but such as I hev, sir, I shall be proud to give you."

"Thank you, Dorcas; I can't eat or drink anything. I 'm not hungry or tired. Let us talk about Tina. Has she spoken at all?"

"Niver since the fust words. 'Dear Dorkis,' says she, 'tek me in;' an' then went off into a faint, an' not a word has she spoken since. I get her t' eat little bits an' sups o' things, but she teks no notice o' nothin'. I 've took up Bessie wi' me now an' then" — here Dorcas lifted to her lap a curly-headed little girl of three, who was twisting a corner of her mother's apron, and opening round eyes at the gentleman — "folks 'll tek notice o' children sometimes when they won't o' nothin' else. An' we gethered the autumn crocuses out o' th' orchard, and Bessie carried 'em up in her hand, an' put 'em on the bed. I knowed how fond Miss Tina was o' flowers an' them things, when she was a little un. But she looked at Bessie an' the flowers just the same as if she did n't see 'em. It cuts me to th' heart to look at them eyes o' hers; I think they 're bigger nor iver, an' they look like my poor baby's as died, when it got so thin — oh dear, it 's little hands you could see thro' 'em. But I 've great hopes if she was to see you, sir, as come from the Manor, it might bring back her mind, like."

Maynard had that hope too, but he felt cold mists of fear gathering round him after the few bright warm hours of joyful confidence which had passed since he first heard that Caterina was alive. The thought *would* urge itself upon him that her mind and body might never recover the strain that had been

put upon them — that her delicate thread of life had already nearly spun itself out.

"Go now, Dorcas, and see how she is, but don't say anything about my being here. Perhaps it would be better for me to wait till daylight before I see her, and yet it would be very hard to pass another night in this way."

Dorcas set down little Bessie, and went away. The three other children, including young Daniel in his smock-frock, were standing opposite to Mr. Gilfil, watching him still more shyly now they were without their mother's countenance. He drew little Bessie towards him, and set her on his knee. She shook her yellow curls out of her eyes, and looked up at him as she said —

"Zoo tome to tee ze yady? Zoo mek her peak? What zoo do to her? Tiss her?"

"Do you like to be kissed, Bessie?"

"Det," said Bessie, immediately ducking down her head very low, in resistance to the expected rejoinder.

"We 've got two pups," said young Daniel, emboldened by observing the gentleman's amenities towards Bessie. "Shall I show 'em yer? One 's got white spots."

"Yes, let me see them."

Daniel ran out, and presently reappeared with two blind puppies, eagerly followed by the mother, affectionate though mongrel, and an exciting scene was beginning when Dorcas returned and said —

"There 's niver any difference in her hardly. I think you need n't wait, sir. She lies very still, as she al'ys does. I 've put two candles i' the room, so as she may see you well. You 'll please t' excuse the room, sir, an' the cap as she has on; it 's one o' mine."

Mr. Gilfil nodded silently, and rose to follow her up-stairs. They turned in at the first door, their footsteps making little noise on the plaster floor. The red-checkered linen curtains were drawn at the head of the bed, and Dorcas had placed the candles on this side of the room, so that the light might not fall oppressively on Caterina's eyes. When she had opened the door, Dorcas whispered, "I 'd better leave you, sir, I think?"

Mr. Gilfil motioned assent, and advanced beyond the curtain. Caterina lay with her eyes turned the other way, and seemed unconscious that any one had entered. Her eyes, as Dorcas had said, looked larger than ever, perhaps because her face was thinner and paler, and her hair quite gathered away under one of Dorcas's thick caps. The small hands, too, that lay listlessly on the outside of the bed-clothes were thinner than ever. She looked younger than she really was, and any one seeing the tiny face and hands for the first time might have thought they belonged to a little girl of twelve, who was being taken away from coming instead of past sorrow.

When Mr. Gilfil advanced and stood opposite to her, the light fell full upon his face. A slight startled expression came over Caterina's eyes; she looked at him earnestly for a few moments, then lifted up her hand as if to beckon him to stoop down towards her, and whispered "Maynard!"

He seated himself on the bed, and stooped down towards her. She whispered again —

"Maynard, did you see the dagger?"

He followed his first impulse in answering her, and it was a wise one.

"Yes," he whispered, "I found it in your pocket, and put it back again in the cabinet."

He took her hand in his and held it gently, awaiting what she would say next. His heart swelled so with thankfulness that she had recognized him, he could hardly repress a sob. Gradually her eyes became softer and less intense in their gaze. The tears were slowly gathering, and presently some large hot drops rolled down her cheek. Then the flood-gates were opened, and the heart-easing stream gushed forth; deep sobs came; and for nearly an hour she lay without speaking, while the heavy icy pressure that withheld her misery from utterance was thus melting away. How precious these tears were to Maynard, who day after day had been shuddering at the continually recurring image of Tina with the dry scorching stare of insanity!

By degrees the sobs subsided, she began to breathe calmly, and lay quiet with her eyes shut. Patiently Maynard sat,

not heeding the flight of the hours, not heeding the old clock that ticked loudly on the landing. But when it was nearly ten, Dorcas, impatiently anxious to know the result of Mr. Gilfil's appearance, could not help stepping in on tip-toe. Without moving, he whispered in her ear to supply him with candles, see that the cow-boy had shaken down his mare, and go to bed — he would watch with Caterina — a great change had come over her.

Before long, Tina's lips began to move. "Maynard," she whispered again. He leaned towards her, and she went on —

"You know how wicked I am, then? You know what I meant to do with the dagger?"

"Did you mean to kill yourself, Tina?"

She shook her head slowly, and then was silent for a long while. At last, looking at him with solemn eyes, she whispered, "To kill *him*."

"Tina, my loved one, you would never have done it. God saw your whole heart; He knows you would never harm a living thing. He watches over His children, and will not let them do things they would pray with their whole hearts not to do. It was the angry thought of a moment, and He forgives you."

She sank into silence again till it was nearly midnight. The weary enfeebled spirit seemed to be making its slow way with difficulty through the windings of thought; and when she began to whisper again, it was in reply to Maynard's words.

"But I had had such wicked feelings for a long while. I was so angry, and I hated Miss Assher so, and I did n't care what came to anybody, because I was so miserable myself. I was full of bad passions. No one else was ever so wicked."

"Yes, Tina, many are just as wicked. I often have very wicked feelings, and am tempted to do wrong things; but then my body is stronger than yours, and I can hide my feelings and resist them better. They do not master me so. You have seen the little birds when they are very young and just begin to fly, how all their feathers are ruffled when they are frightened or angry: they have no power over themselves left,

and might fall into a pit from mere fright. You were like one of those little birds. Your sorrow and suffering had taken such hold of you, you hardly knew what you did."

He would not speak long, lest he should tire her, and oppress her with too many thoughts. Long pauses seemed needful for her before she could concentrate her feelings in short words.

"But when I meant to do it," was the next thing she whispered, "it was as bad as if I had done it."

"No, my Tina," answered Maynard, slowly, waiting a little between each sentence; "we mean to do wicked things that we never could do, just as we mean to do good or clever things that we never could do. Our thoughts are often worse than we are, just as they are often better than we are. And God sees us as we are altogether, not in separate feelings or actions, as our fellow-men see us. We are always doing each other injustice, and thinking better or worse of each other than we deserve, because we only hear and see separate words and actions. We don't see each other's whole nature. But God sees that you could not have committed that crime."

Caterina shook her head slowly, and was silent. After a while —

"I don't know," she said; "I seemed to see him coming towards me, just as he would really have looked, and I meant — I meant to do it."

"But when you saw him — tell me how it was, Tina?"

"I saw him lying on the ground and thought he was ill. I don't know how it was then; I forgot everything. I knelt down and spoke to him, and — and he took no notice of me, and his eyes were fixed, and I began to think he was dead."

"And you have never felt angry since?"

"Oh no, no; it is I who have been more wicked than any one; it is I who have been wrong all through."

"No, Tina; the fault has not all been yours; *he* was wrong; he gave you provocation. And wrong makes wrong. When people use us ill, we can hardly help having ill feeling towards them. But that second wrong is more excusable. I am more sinful than you, Tina; I have often had very bad feelings

towards Captain Wybrow; and if he had provoked me as he did you, I should perhaps have done something more wicked."

"Oh, it was not so wrong in him; he did n't know how he hurt me. How was it likely he could love me as I loved him? And how could he marry a poor little thing like me?"

Maynard made no reply to this, and there was again silence, till Tina said —

"Then I was so deceitful; they did n't know how wicked I was. Padroncello did n't know; his good little monkey he used to call me; and if he had known, oh, how naughty he would have thought me!"

"My Tina, we have all our secret sins; and if we knew ourselves, we should not judge each other harshly. Sir Christopher himself has felt, since this trouble came upon him, that he has been too severe and obstinate."

In this way — in these broken confessions and answering words of comfort — the hours wore on, from the deep black night to the chill early twilight, and from early twilight to the first yellow streak of morning parting the purple cloud. Mr. Gilfil felt as if in the long hours of that night the bond that united his love forever and alone to Caterina had acquired fresh strength and sanctity. It is so with the human relations that rest on the deep emotional sympathy of affection: every new day and night of joy or sorrow is a new ground, a new consecration, for the love that is nourished by memories as well as hopes — the love to which perpetual repetition is not a weariness but a want, and to which a separated joy is the beginning of pain.

The cocks began to crow; the gate swung; there was a tramp of footsteps in the yard, and Mr. Gilfil heard Dorcas stirring. These sounds seemed to affect Caterina, for she looked anxiously at him and said, "Maynard, are you going away?"

"No, I shall stay here at Callam until you are better, and then you will go away too."

"Never to the Manor again, oh no! I shall live poorly, and get my own bread."

"Well, dearest, you shall do what you would like best.

But I wish you could go to sleep now. Try to rest quietly, and by-and-by you will perhaps sit up a little. God has kept you in life in spite of all this sorrow; it will be sinful not to try and make the best of His gift. Dear Tina, you *will* try; — and little Bessie brought you some crocuses once, you did n't notice the poor little thing; but you will notice her when she comes again, will you not?"

"I will try," whispered Tina humbly, and then closed her eyes.

By the time the sun was above the horizon, scattering the clouds, and shining with pleasant morning warmth through the little leaded window, Caterina was asleep. Maynard gently loosed the tiny hand, cheered Dorcas with the good news, and made his way to the village inn, with a thankful heart that Tina had been so far herself again. Evidently the sight of him had blended naturally with the memories in which her mind was absorbed, and she had been led on to an unburthening of herself that might be the beginning of a complete restoration. But her body was so enfeebled — her soul so bruised — that the utmost tenderness and care would be necessary. The next thing to be done was to send tidings to Sir Christopher and Lady Cheverel; then to write and summon his sister, under whose care he had determined to place Caterina. The Manor, even if she had been wishing to return thither, would, he knew, be the most undesirable home for her at present: every scene, every object there, was associated with still unallayed anguish. If she were domesticated for a time with his mild gentle sister, who had a peaceful home and a prattling little boy, Tina might attach herself anew to life, and recover, partly at least, the shock that had been given to her constitution. When he had written his letters and taken a hasty breakfast, he was soon in his saddle again, on his way to Sloppeter, where he would post them, and seek out a medical man, to whom he might confide the moral causes of Caterina's enfeebled condition.

CHAPTER XX.

In less than a week from that time, Caterina was persuaded to travel in a comfortable carriage, under the care of Mr. Gilfil and his sister, Mrs. Heron, whose soft blue eyes and mild manners were very soothing to the poor bruised child — the more so as they had an air of sisterly equality which was quite new to her. Under Lady Cheverel's uncaressing authoritative good-will Tina had always retained a certain constraint and awe; and there was a sweetness before unknown in having a young and gentle woman, like an elder sister, bending over her caressingly, and speaking in low loving tones.

Maynard was almost angry with himself for feeling happy while Tina's mind and body were still trembling on the verge of irrecoverable decline; but the new delight of acting as her guardian angel, of being with her every hour of the day, of devising everything for her comfort, of watching for a ray of returning interest in her eyes, was too absorbing to leave room for alarm or regret.

On the third day the carriage drove up to the door of Foxholm Parsonage, where the Rev. Arthur Heron presented himself on the door-step, eager to greet his returning Lucy, and holding by the hand a broad-chested tawny-haired boy of five, who was smacking a miniature hunting-whip with great vigor.

Nowhere was there a lawn more smooth-shaven, walks better swept, or a porch more prettily festooned with creepers, than at Foxholm Parsonage, standing snugly sheltered by beeches and chestnuts half-way down the pretty green hill which was surmounted by the church, and overlooking a village that straggled at its ease among pastures and meadows, surrounded by wild hedgerows and broad shadowing trees, as yet unthreatened by improved methods of farming.

Brightly the fire shone in the great parlor, and brightly in the little pink bed-room, which was to be Caterina's, because

it looked away from the churchyard, and on to a farm homestead, with its little cluster of beehive ricks, and placid groups of cows, and cheerful matin sounds of healthy labor. Mrs. Heron, with the instinct of a delicate, impressible woman, had written to her husband to have this room prepared for Caterina. Contented speckled hens, industriously scratching for the rarely found corn, may sometimes do more for a sick heart than a grove of nightingales; there is something irresistibly calming in the unsentimental cheeriness of top-knotted pullets, unpetted sheep-dogs, and patient cart-horses enjoying a drink of muddy water.

In such a home as this parsonage, a nest of comfort, without any of the stateliness that would carry a suggestion of Cheverel Manor, Mr. Gilfil was not unreasonable in hoping that Caterina might gradually shake off the haunting vision of the past, and recover from the languor and feebleness which were the physical sign of that vision's blighting presence. The next thing to be done was to arrange an exchange of duties with Mr. Heron's curate, that Maynard might be constantly near Caterina, and watch over her progress. She seemed to like him to be with her, to look uneasily for his return; and though she seldom spoke to him, she was most contented when he sat by her, and held her tiny hand in his large protecting grasp. But Oswald, *alias* Ozzy, the broad-chested boy, was perhaps her most beneficial companion. With something of his uncle's person, he had inherited also his uncle's early taste for a domestic menagerie, and was very imperative in demanding Tina's sympathy in the welfare of his guinea-pigs, squirrels, and dormice. With him she seemed now and then to have gleams of her childhood coming athwart the leaden clouds, and many hours of winter went by the more easily for being spent in Ozzy's nursery.

Mrs. Heron was not musical, and had no instrument; but one of Mr. Gilfil's cares was to procure a harpsichord, and have it placed in the drawing-room, always open, in the hope that some day the spirit of music would be reawakened in Caterina, and she would be attracted towards the instrument. But the winter was almost gone by, and he had waited in vain.

The utmost improvement in Tina had not gone beyond passiveness and acquiescence — a quiet grateful smile, compliance with Oswald's whims, and an increasing consciousness of what was being said and done around her. Sometimes she would take up a bit of woman's work, but she seemed too languid to persevere in it; her fingers soon dropped, and she relapsed into motionless reverie.

At last — it was one of those bright days in the end of February, when the sun is shining with a promise of approaching spring. Maynard had been walking with her and Oswald round the garden to look at the snowdrops, and she was resting on the sofa after the walk. Ozzy, roaming about the room in quest of a forbidden pleasure, came to the harpsichord, and struck the handle of his whip on a deep bass note.

The vibration rushed through Caterina like an electric shock: it seemed as if at that instant a new soul were entering into her, and filling her with a deeper, more significant life. She looked round, rose from the sofa, and walked to the harpsichord. In a moment her fingers were wandering with their old sweet method among the keys, and her soul was floating in its true familiar element of delicious sound, as the water-plant that lies withered and shrunken on the ground expands into freedom and beauty when once more bathed in its native flood.

Maynard thanked God. An active power was reawakened, and must make a new epoch in Caterina's recovery.

Presently there were low liquid notes blending themselves with the harder tones of the instrument, and gradually the pure voice swelled into predominance. Little Ozzy stood in the middle of the room, with his mouth open and his legs very wide apart, struck with something like awe at this new power in "Tin-Tin," as he called her, whom he had been accustomed to think of as a playfellow not at all clever, and very much in need of his instruction on many subjects. A genie soaring with broad wings out of his milk-jug would not have been more astonishing.

Caterina was singing the very air from the *Orfeo* which we heard her singing so many months ago at the beginning of her

sorrows. It was *Che farò*, Sir Christopher's favorite, and its notes seemed to carry on their wings all the tenderest memories of her life, when Cheverel Manor was still an untroubled home. The long happy days of childhood and girlhood recovered all their rightful predominance over the short interval of sin and sorrow.

She paused, and burst into tears — the first tears she had shed since she had been at Foxholm. Maynard could not help hurrying towards her, putting his arm round her, and leaning down to kiss her hair. She nestled to him, and put up her little mouth to be kissed.

The delicate-tendrilled plant must have something to cling to. The soul that was born anew to music was born anew to love.

CHAPTER XXI.

On the 30th of May, 1790, a very pretty sight was seen by the villagers assembled near the door of Foxholm church. The sun was bright upon the dewy grass, the air was alive with the murmur of bees and the trilling of birds, the bushy blossoming chestnuts and the foamy flowering hedgerows seemed to be crowding round to learn why the church-bells were ringing so merrily, as Maynard Gilfil, his face bright with happiness, walked out of the old Gothic doorway with Tina on his arm. The little face was still pale, and there was a subdued melancholy in it, as of one who sups with friends for the last time, and has his ear open for the signal that will call him away. But the tiny hand rested with the pressure of contented affection on Maynard's arm, and the dark eyes met his downward glance with timid answering love.

There was no train of bridesmaids; only pretty Mrs. Heron leaning on the arm of a dark-haired young man hitherto unknown in Foxholm, and holding by the other hand little Ozzy,

who exulted less in his new velvet cap and tunic, than in the notion that he was bridesman to Tin-Tin.

Last of all came a couple whom the villagers eyed yet more eagerly than the bride and bridegroom: a fine old gentleman, who looked round with keen glances that cowed the conscious scapegraces among them, and a stately lady in blue-and-white silk robes, who must surely be like Queen Charlotte.

"Well, that theer 's whut I call a pictur," said old "Mester" Ford, a true Staffordshire patriarch, who leaned on a stick and held his head very much on one side, with the air of a man who had little hope of the present generation, but would at all events give it the benefit of his criticism. "Th' yoong men noo-a-deys, the 're poor squashy things — the' looke well anoof, but the' woon't wear, the' woon't wear. Theer 's ne'er un 'll carry his 'ears like that Sir Cris'fer Chuvrell."

"'Ull bet ye two pots," said another of the seniors, "as that yoongster a-walkin' wi' th' parson's wife 'll be Sir Cris'fer's son — he favors him."

"Nay, yae 'll bet that wi' as big a fule as yersen; hae 's noo son at all. As I oonderstan', hae 's the nevey as is t' heir th' esteate. The coochman as puts oop at th' White Hoss tellt me as theer war another nevey, a deal finer chap t' looke at nor this un, as died in a fit, all on a soodden, an' soo this here yoong un 's got upo' th' perch istid."

At the church gate Mr. Bates was standing in a new suit, ready to speak words of good omen as the bride and bridegroom approached. He had come all the way from Cheverel Manor on purpose to see Miss Tina happy once more, and would have been in a state of unmixed joy but for the inferiority of the wedding nosegays to what he could have furnished from the garden at the Manor.

"God A'maighty bless ye both, an' send ye long laife an' happiness," were the good gardener's rather tremulous words.

"Thank you, Uncle Bates; always remember Tina," said the sweet low voice, which fell on Mr. Bates's ear for the last time.

The wedding journey was to be a circuitous route to Shepperton, where Mr. Gilfil had been for several months inducted

as vicar. This small living had been given him through the interest of an old friend who had some claim on the gratitude of the Oldinport family; and it was a satisfaction both to Maynard and Sir Christopher that a home to which he might take Caterina had thus readily presented itself at a distance from Cheverel Manor. For it had never yet been thought safe that she should revisit the scene of her sufferings, her health continuing too delicate to encourage the slightest risk of painful excitement. In a year or two, perhaps, by the time old Mr. Crichley, the rector of Cumbermoor, should have left a world of gout, and when Caterina would very likely be a happy mother, Maynard might safely take up his abode at Cumbermoor, and Tina would feel nothing but content at seeing a new "little black-eyed monkey" running up and down the gallery and gardens of the Manor. A mother dreads no memories — those shadows have all melted away in the dawn of baby's smile.

In these hopes, and in the enjoyment of Tina's nestling affection, Mr. Gilfil tasted a few months of perfect happiness. She had come to lean entirely on his love, and to find life sweet for his sake. Her continual languor and want of active interest was a natural consequence of bodily feebleness, and the prospect of her becoming a mother was a new ground for hoping the best.

But the delicate plant had been too deeply bruised, and in the struggle to put forth a blossom it died.

Tina died, and Maynard Gilfil's love went with her into deep silence forevermore.

EPILOGUE.

This was Mr. Gilfil's love-story, which lay far back from the time when he sat, worn and gray, by his lonely fireside in Shepperton Vicarage. Rich brown locks, passionate love, and deep early sorrow, strangely different as they seem from the scanty white hairs, the apathetic content, and the unexpectant quiescence of old age, are but part of the same life's journey; as the bright Italian plains, with the sweet *Addio* of their beckoning maidens, are part of the same day's travel that brings us to the other side of the mountain, between the sombre rocky walls and among the guttural voices of the Valais.

To those who were familiar only with the gray-haired Vicar, jogging leisurely along on his old chestnut cob, it would perhaps have been hard to believe that he had ever been the Maynard Gilfil who, with a heart full of passion and tenderness, had urged his black Kitty to her swiftest gallop on the way to Callam, or that the old gentleman of caustic tongue, and bucolic tastes, and sparing habits, had known all the deep secrets of devoted love, had struggled through its days and nights of anguish, and trembled under its unspeakable joys. And indeed the Mr. Gilfil of those late Shepperton days had more of the knots and ruggedness of poor human nature than there lay any clear hint of in the open-eyed loving Maynard. But it is with men as with trees: if you lop off their finest branches, into which they were pouring their young life-juice, the wounds will be healed over with some rough boss, some odd excrescence; and what might have been a grand tree expanding into liberal shade, is but a whimsical misshapen trunk. Many an irritating fault, many an unlovely oddity, has come of a hard sorrow, which has crushed and maimed the nature just when it was expanding into plenteous beauty; and the trivial erring life which we visit with our harsh blame, may

be but as the unsteady motion of a man whose best limb is withered.

And so the dear old Vicar, though he had something of the knotted whimsical character of the poor lopped oak, had yet been sketched out by nature as a noble tree. The heart of him was sound, the grain was of the finest; and in the gray-haired man who filled his pocket with sugar-plums for the little children, whose most biting words were directed against the evil doing of the rich man, and who, with all his social pipes and slipshod talk, never sank below the highest level of his parishioners' respect, there was the main trunk of the same brave, faithful, tender nature, that had poured out the finest, freshest forces of its life-current in a first and only love — the love of Tina.

SCENES OF CLERICAL LIFE.

JANET'S REPENTANCE.



JANET AT MRS. PETTIFER'S DOOR.

JANET'S REPENTANCE.

CHAPTER I.

"Yes!" said lawyer Dempster, in a loud, rasping, oratorical tone, struggling against chronic huskiness, "as long as my Maker grants me power of voice and power of intellect, I will take every legal means to resist the introduction of demoralizing, methodistical doctrine into this parish; I will not supinely suffer an insult to be inflicted on our venerable pastor, who has given us sound instruction for half a century."

It was very warm everywhere that evening, but especially in the bar of the Red Lion at Milby, where Mr. Dempster was seated mixing his third glass of brandy-and-water. He was a tall and rather massive man, and the front half of his large surface was so well dredged with snuff, that the cat, having inadvertently come near him, had been seized with a severe fit of sneezing — an accident which, being cruelly misunderstood, had caused her to be driven contumeliously from the bar. Mr. Dempster habitually held his chin tucked in, and his head hanging forward, weighed down, perhaps, by a preponderant occiput and a bulging forehead, between which his closely clipped coronal surface lay like a flat and new-mown table-land. The only other observable features were puffy cheeks and a protruding yet lipless mouth. Of his nose I can only say that it was snuffy; and as Mr. Dempster was never caught in the act of looking at anything in particular, it would have been difficult to swear to the color of his eyes.

"Well! I'll not stick at giving *my*self trouble to put down such hypocritical cant," said Mr. Tomlinson, the rich miller

"I know well enough what your Sunday evening lectures are good for — for wenches to meet their sweethearts, and brew mischief. There 's work enough with the servant-maids as it is — such as I never heard the like of in my mother's time, and it 's all along o' your schooling and newfangled plans. Give me a servant as can nayther read nor write, I say, and does n't know the year o' the Lord as she was born in. I should like to know what good those Sunday schools have done, now. Why, the boys used to go a bird's-nesting of a Sunday morning; and a capital thing too — ask any farmer; and very pretty it was to see the strings o' heggs hanging up in poor people's houses. You 'll not see 'em nowhere now."

"Pooh!" said Mr. Luke Byles, who piqued himself on his reading, and was in the habit of asking casual acquaintances if they knew anything of Hobbes; "it is right enough that the lower orders should be instructed. But this sectarianism within the Church ought to be put down. In point of fact, these Evangelicals are not Churchmen at all; they 're no better than Presbyterians."

"Presbyterians? what are they?" inquired Mr. Tomlinson, who often said his father had given him "no eddication, and he did n't care who knowed it; he could buy up most o' th' eddicated men he 'd ever come across."

"The Presbyterians," said Mr. Dempster, in rather a louder tone than before, holding that every appeal for information must naturally be addressed to him, "are a sect founded in the reign of Charles I., by a man named John Presbyter, who hatched all the brood of Dissenting vermin that crawl about in dirty alleys, and circumvent the lord of the manor in order to get a few yards of ground for their pigeon-house conventicles."

"No, no, Dempster," said Mr. Luke Byles, "you 're out there. Presbyterianism is derived from the word presbyter, meaning an elder."

"Don't contradict *me*, sir!" stormed Dempster. "I say the word presbyterian is derived from John Presbyter, a miserable fanatic who wore a suit of leather, and went about from

town to village, and from village to hamlet, inoculating the vulgar with the asinine virus of Dissent."

"Come, Byles, that seems a deal more likely," said Mr. Tomlinson, in a conciliatory tone, apparently of opinion that history was a process of ingenious guessing.

"It's not a question of likelihood; it's a known fact. I could fetch you my Encyclopædia, and show it you this moment."

"I don't care a straw, sir, either for you or your Encyclopædia," said Mr. Dempster; "a farrago of false information of which you picked up an imperfect copy in a cargo of waste paper. Will you tell *me*, sir, that I don't know the origin of Presbyterianism? I, sir, a man known through the county, intrusted with the affairs of half a score parishes; while you, sir, are ignored by the very fleas that infest the miserable alley in which you were bred."

A loud and general laugh, with "You 'd better let him alone, Byles;" "You 'll not get the better of Dempster in a hurry," drowned the retort of the too well-informed Mr. Byles, who, white with rage, rose and walked out of the bar.

"A meddlesome, upstart, Jacobinical fellow, gentlemen," continued Mr. Dempster. "I was determined to be rid of him. What does he mean by thrusting himself into our company? A man with about as much principle as he has property, which, to my knowledge, is considerably less than none. An insolvent atheist, gentlemen. A deistical prater, fit to sit in the chimney-corner of a pot-house, and make blasphemous comments on the one greasy newspaper fingered by beer-swilling tinkers. I will not suffer in my company a man who speaks lightly of religion. The signature of a fellow like Byles would be a blot on our protest."

"And how do you get on with your signatures?" said Mr. Pilgrim, the doctor, who had presented his large top-booted person within the bar while Mr. Dempster was speaking. Mr. Pilgrim had just returned from one of his long day's rounds among the farm-houses, in the course of which he had sat down to two hearty meals that might have been mistaken for dinners

if he had not declared them to be "snaps;" and as each snap had been followed by a few glasses of "mixture," containing a less liberal proportion of water than the articles he himself labelled with that broadly generic name, he was in that condition which his groom indicated with poetic ambiguity by saying that "master had been in the sunshine." Under these circumstances, after a hard day, in which he had really had no regular meal, it seemed a natural relaxation to step into the bar of the Red Lion, where, as it was Saturday evening, he should be sure to find Dempster, and hear the latest news about the protest against the evening lecture.

"Have you hooked Ben Landor yet?" he continued, as he took two chairs, one for his body, and the other for his right leg.

"No," said Mr. Budd, the churchwarden, shaking his head; "Ben Landor has a way of keeping himself neutral in everything, and he doesn't like to oppose his father. Old Landor is a regular Tryanite. But we haven't got your name yet, Pilgrim."

"Tut tut, Budd," said Mr. Dempster, sarcastically, "you don't expect Pilgrim to sign? He's got a dozen Tryanite livers under his treatment. Nothing like cant and methodism for producing a superfluity of bile."

"Oh, I thought, as Pratt had declared himself a Tryanite, we should be sure to get Pilgrim on our side."

Mr. Pilgrim was not a man to sit quiet under a sarcasm, nature having endowed him with a considerable share of self-defensive wit. In his most sober moments he had an impediment in his speech, and as copious gin-and-water stimulated not the speech but the impediment, he had time to make his retort sufficiently bitter.

"Why, to tell you the truth, Budd," he spluttered, "there's a report all over the town that Deb Traunter swears you shall take her with you as one of the delegates, and they say there's to be a fine crowd at your door the morning you start, to see the row. Knowing your tenderness for that member of the fair sex, I thought you might find it impossible to deny her. I hang back a little from signing on that account, as Prendergast

might not take the protest well if Deb Traunter went with you."

Mr. Budd was a small, sleek-headed bachelor of five-and-forty, whose scandalous life had long furnished his more moral neighbors with an after-dinner joke. He had no other striking characteristic, except that he was a currier of choleric temperament, so that you might wonder why he had been chosen as clergyman's churchwarden, if I did not tell you that he had recently been elected through Mr. Dempster's exertions, in order that his zeal against the threatened evening lecture might be backed by the dignity of office.

"Come, come, Pilgrim," said Mr. Tomlinson, covering Mr. Budd's retreat, "you know you like to wear the crier's coat, green o' one side and red o' the other. You 've been to hear Tryan preach at Paddiford Common — you know you have."

"To be sure I have; and a capital sermon too. It 's a pity you were not there. It was addressed to those 'void of understanding.' "

"No, no, you 'll never catch me there," returned Mr. Tomlinson, not in the least stung; "he preaches without book, they say, just like a Dissenter. It must be a rambling sort of a concern."

"That 's not the worst," said Mr. Dempster; "he preaches against good works; says good works are not necessary to salvation — a sectarian, antinomian, anabaptist doctrine. Tell a man he is not to be saved by his works, and you open the flood-gates of all immorality. You see it in all these canting innovators; they 're all bad ones by the sly; smooth-faced, drawling, hypocritical fellows, who pretend ginger is n't hot in their mouths, and cry down all innocent pleasures; their hearts are all the blacker for their sanctimonious outsides. Have n't we been warned against those who make clean the outside of the cup and the platter? There 's this Tryan, now, he goes about praying with old women, and singing with charity children; but what has he really got his eye on all the while? A domineering ambitious Jesuit, gentlemen; all he wants is to get his foot far enough into the parish to step into Crewe's shoes when the old gentleman dies. Depend upon it, when

ever you see a man pretending to be better than his neighbors, that man has either some cunning end to serve, or his heart is rotten with spiritual pride."

As if to guarantee himself against this awful sin, Mr. Dempster seized his glass of brandy-and-water, and tossed off the contents with even greater rapidity than usual.

"Have you fixed on your third delegate yet?" said Mr. Pilgrim, whose taste was for detail rather than for dissertation.

"That's the man," answered Dempster, pointing to Mr. Tomlinson. "We start for Elmstoke Rectory on Tuesday morning; so, if you mean to give us your signature, you must make up your mind pretty quickly, Pilgrim."

Mr. Pilgrim did not in the least mean it, so he only said, "I should n't wonder if Tryan turns out too many for you, after all. He 's got a well-oiled tongue of his own, and has perhaps talked over Prendergast into a determination to stand by him."

"Ve-ry little fear of that," said Dempster, in a confident tone. "I 'll soon bring him round. Tryan has got his match. I 've plenty of rods in pickle for Tryan."

At this moment Boots entered the bar, and put a letter into the lawyer's hands, saying, "There 's Trower's man just come into the yard wi' a gig, sir, an' he 's brought this here letter."

Mr. Dempster read the letter and said, "Tell him to turn the gig — I 'll be with him in a minute. Here, run to Gruby's and get this snuff-box filled — quick!"

"Trower 's worse, I suppose; eh, Dempster? Wants you to alter his will, eh?" said Mr. Pilgrim.

"Business — business — business — I don't know exactly what," answered the cautious Dempster, rising deliberately from his chair, thrusting on his low-crowned hat, and walking with a slow but not unsteady step out of the bar.

"I never see Dempster's equal; if I did I 'll be shot," said Mr. Tomlinson, looking after the lawyer admiringly. "Why, he 's drunk the best part of a bottle o' brandy since here we 've been sitting, and I 'll bet a guinea, when he 's got to Trower's his head 'll be as clear as mine. He knows more about law when he 's drunk than all the rest on 'em when they 're sober."

"Ay, and other things too, besides law," said Mr. Budd. "Did you notice how he took up Byles about the Presbyterians? Bless your heart, he knows everything, Dempster does. He studied very hard when he was a young man."

CHAPTER II.

The conversation just recorded is not, I am aware, remarkably refined or witty; but if it had been, it could hardly have taken place in Milby when Mr. Dempster flourished there, and old Mr. Crewe, the curate, was yet alive.

More than a quarter of a century has slipped by since then, and in the interval Milby has advanced at as rapid a pace as other market-towns in her Majesty's dominions. By this time it has a handsome railway-station, where the drowsy London traveller may look out by the brilliant gas-light and see perfectly sober papas and husbands alighting with their leather bags after transacting their day's business at the county town. There is a resident rector, who appeals to the consciences of his hearers with all the immense advantages of a divine who keeps his own carriage; the church is enlarged by at least five hundred sittings; and the grammar-school, conducted on reformed principles, has its upper forms crowded with the genteel youth of Milby. The gentlemen there fall into no other excess at dinner-parties than the perfectly well-bred and virtuous excess of stupidity; and though the ladies are still said sometimes to take too much upon themselves, they are never known to take too much in any other way. The conversation is sometimes quite literary, for there is a flourishing book-club, and many of the younger ladies have carried their studies so far as to have forgotten a little German. In short, Milby is now a refined, moral, and enlightened town; no more resembling the Milby of former days than the huge, long-

skirted, drab great-coat that embarrassed the ankles of our grandfathers resembled the light paletot in which we tread jauntily through the muddiest streets, or than the bottle-nosed Britons, rejoicing over a tankard in the old sign of the Two Travellers at Milby, resembled the severe-looking gentleman in straps and high collars whom a modern artist has represented as sipping the imaginary port of that well-known commercial house.

But pray, reader, dismiss from your mind all the refined and fashionable ideas associated with this advanced state of things, and transport your imagination to a time when Milby had no gas-lights; when the mail drove up dusty or bespattered to the door of the Red Lion; when old Mr. Crewe, the curate, in a brown Brutus wig, delivered inaudible sermons on a Sunday, and on a week-day imparted the education of a gentleman — that is to say, an arduous inacquaintance with Latin through the medium of the Eton Grammar — to three pupils in the upper grammar-school.

If you had passed through Milby on the coach at that time, you would have had no idea what important people lived there, and how very high a sense of rank was prevalent among them. It was a dingy-looking town, with a strong smell of tanning up one street and a great shaking of hand-looms up another; and even in that focus of aristocracy, Friar's Gate, the houses would not have seemed very imposing to the hasty and superficial glance of a passenger. You might still less have suspected that the figure in light fustian and large gray whiskers, leaning against the grocer's door-post in High Street, was no less a person than Mr. Lowme, one of the most aristocratic men in Milby, said to have been "brought up a gentleman," and to have had the gay habits accordant with that station, keeping his harriers and other expensive animals. He was now quite an elderly Lothario, reduced to the most economical sins; the prominent form of his gayety being this of lounging at Mr. Gruby's door, embarrassing the servant-maids who came for grocery, and talking scandal with the rare passers-by. Still, it was generally understood that Mr. Lowme belonged to the highest circle of Milby society; his sons and daughters

held up their heads very high indeed; and in spite of his condescending way of chatting and drinking with inferior people, he would himself have scorned any closer identification with them. It must be admitted that he was of some service to the town in this station at Mr. Gruby's door, for he and Mr. Landor's Newfoundland dog, who stretched himself and gaped on the opposite causeway, took something from the lifeless air that belonged to the High Street on every day except Saturday.

Certainly, in spite of three assemblies and a charity ball in the winter, the occasional advent of a ventriloquist, or a company of itinerant players, some of whom were very highly thought of in London, and the annual three-days' fair in June, Milby might be considered dull by people of a hypochondriacal temperament; and perhaps this was one reason why many of the middle-aged inhabitants, male and female, often found it impossible to keep up their spirits without a very abundant supply of stimulants. It is true there were several substantial men who had a reputation for exceptional sobriety, so that Milby habits were really not as bad as possible; and no one is warranted in saying that old Mr. Crewe's flock could not have been worse without any clergyman at all.

The well-dressed parishioners generally were very regular church-goers, and to the younger ladies and gentlemen I am inclined to think that the Sunday morning service was the most exciting event of the week; for few places could present a more brilliant show of out-door toilets than might be seen issuing from Milby church at one o'clock. There were the four tall Miss Pittmans, old lawyer Pittman's daughters, with cannon curls surmounted by large hats, and long, drooping ostrich feathers of parrot green. There was Miss Phipps, with a crimson bonnet, very much tilted up behind, and a cockade of stiff feathers on the summit. There was Miss Landor, the belle of Milby, clad regally in purple and ermine, with a plume of feathers neither drooping nor erect, but maintaining a discreet medium. There were the three Miss Tomlinsons, who imitated Miss Landor, and also wore ermine and feathers; but their beauty was considered of a coarse order,

and their square forms were quite unsuited to the round tippet which fell with such remarkable grace on Miss Landor's sloping shoulders. Looking at this plumed procession of ladies, you would have formed rather a high idea of Milby wealth; yet there was only one close carriage in the place, and that was old Mr. Landor's, the banker, who, I think, never drove more than one horse. These sumptuously attired ladies flashed past the vulgar eye in one-horse chaises, by no means of a superior build.

The young gentlemen, too, were not without their little Sunday displays of costume, of a limited masculine kind. Mr. Eustace Landor, being nearly of age, had recently acquired a diamond ring, together with the habit of rubbing his hand through his hair. He was tall and dark, and thus had an advantage which Mr. Alfred Phipps, who, like his sister, was blond and stumpy, found it difficult to overtake, even by the severest attention to shirt-studs, and the particular shade of brown that was best relieved by gilt buttons.

The respect for the Sabbath, manifested in this attention to costume, was unhappily counterbalanced by considerable levity of behavior during the prayers and sermon; for the young ladies and gentlemen of Milby were of a very satirical turn, Miss Landor especially being considered remarkably clever, and a terrible quiz; and the large congregation necessarily containing many persons inferior in dress and demeanor to the distinguished aristocratic minority, divine service offered irresistible temptations to joking, through the medium of telegraphic communications from the galleries to the aisles and back again. I remember blushing very much, and thinking Miss Landor was laughing at me, because I was appearing in coat-tails for the first time, when I saw her look down slyly towards where I sat, and then turn with a titter to handsome Mr. Bob Lowme, who had such beautiful whiskers meeting under his chin. But perhaps she was not thinking of me, after all; for our pew was near the pulpit, and there was almost always something funny about old Mr. Crewe. His brown wig was hardly ever put on quite right, and he had a way of raising his voice for three or four words, and lowering it again

to a mumble, so that we could scarcely make out a word he said; though, as my mother observed, that was of no consequence in the prayers, since every one had a prayer-book; and as for the sermon, she continued with some causticity, we all of us heard more of it than we could remember when we got home.

This youthful generation was not particularly literary. The young ladies who frizzed their hair, and gathered it all into large barricades in front of their heads, leaving their occipital region exposed without ornament, as if that, being a back view, was of no consequence, dreamed as little that their daughters would read a selection of German poetry, and be able to express an admiration for Schiller, as that they would turn all their hair the other way — that instead of threatening us with barricades in front, they would be most killing in retreat,

"And, like the Parthian, wound us as they fly."

Those charming well-frizzed ladies spoke French indeed with considerable facility, unshackled by any timid regard to idiom, and were in the habit of conducting conversations in that language in the presence of their less instructed elders; for according to the standard of those backward days, their education had been very lavish, such young ladies as Miss Landor, Miss Phipps, and the Miss Pittmans, having been "finished" at distant and expensive schools.

Old lawyer Pittman had once been a very important person indeed, having in his earlier days managed the affairs of several gentlemen in those parts, who had subsequently been obliged to sell everything and leave the country, in which crisis Mr. Pittman accommodatingly stepped in as a purchaser of their estates, taking on himself the risk and trouble of a more leisurely sale; which, however, happened to turn out very much to his advantage. Such opportunities occur quite unexpectedly in the way of business. But I think Mr. Pittman must have been unlucky in his later speculations, for now, in his old age, he had not the reputation of being very rich; and though he rode slowly to his office in Milby every morning

on an old white hackney, he had to resign the chief profits, as well as the active business of the firm, to his younger partner, Dempster. No one in Milby considered old Pittman a virtuous man, and the elder townspeople were not at all backward in narrating the least advantageous portions of his biography in a very round unvarnished manner. Yet I could never observe that they trusted him any the less, or liked him any the worse. Indeed, Pittman and Dempster were the popular lawyers of Milby and its neighborhood, and Mr. Benjamin Landor, whom no one had anything particular to say against, had a very meagre business in comparison. Hardly a landholder, hardly a farmer, hardly a parish within ten miles of Milby, whose affairs were not under the legal guardianship of Pittman and Dempster; and I think the clients were proud of their lawyers' unscrupulousness, as the patrons of the fancy are proud of their champion's "condition." It was not, to be sure, the thing for ordinary life, but it was the thing to be bet on in a lawyer. Dempster's talent in "bringing through" a client was a very common topic of conversation with the farmers, over an incidental glass of grog at the Red Lion. "He 's a long-headed feller, Dempster; why, it shows yer what a headpiece Dempster has, as he can drink a bottle o' brandy at a sittin', an' yit see further through a stone wall when he 's done, than other folks 'll see through a glass winder." Even Mr. Jerome, chief member of the congregation at Salem Chapel, an elderly man of very strict life, was one of Dempster's clients, and had quite an exceptional indulgence for his attorney's foibles, perhaps attributing them to the inevitable incompatibility of law and gospel.

The standard of morality at Milby, you perceive, was not inconveniently high in those good old times, and an ingenuous vice or two was what every man expected of his neighbor. Old Mr. Crewe, the curate, for example, was allowed to enjoy his avarice in comfort, without fear of sarcastic parish demagogues; and his flock liked him all the better for having scraped together a large fortune out of his school and curacy, and the proceeds of the three thousand pounds he had with his little deaf wife. It was clear he must be a learned man,

for he had once had a large private school in connection with the grammar-school, and had even numbered a young nobleman or two among his pupils. The fact that he read nothing at all now, and that his mind seemed absorbed in the commonest matters, was doubtless due to his having exhausted the resources of erudition earlier in life. It is true he was not spoken of in terms of high respect, and old Crewe's stingy housekeeping was a frequent subject of jesting; but this was a good old-fashioned characteristic in a parson who had been part of Milby life for half a century: it was like the dents and disfigurements in an old family tankard, which no one would like to part with for a smart new piece of plate fresh from Birmingham. The parishioners saw no reason at all why it should be desirable to venerate the parson or any one else: they were much more comfortable to look down a little on their fellow-creatures.

Even the Dissent in Milby was then of a lax and indifferent kind. The doctrine of adult baptism, struggling under a heavy load of debt, had let off half its chapel area as a ribbon-shop; and Methodism was only to be detected, as you detect curious larvæ, by diligent search in dirty corners. The Independents were the only Dissenters of whose existence Milby gentility was at all conscious, and it had a vague idea that the salient points of their creed were prayer without book, red brick, and hypocrisy. The Independent chapel, known as Salem, stood red and conspicuous in a broad street; more than one pew-holder kept a brass-bound gig; and Mr. Jerome, a retired corn-factor, and the most eminent member of the congregation, was one of the richest men in the parish. But in spite of this apparent prosperity, together with the usual amount of extemporaneous preaching mitigated by furtive notes, Salem belied its name, and was not always the abode of peace. For some reason or other, it was unfortunate in the choice of its ministers. The Rev. Mr. Horner, elected with brilliant hopes, was discovered to be given to tippling and quarrelling with his wife; the Rev. Mr. Rose's doctrine was a little too "high," verging on antinomianism; the Rev. Mr. Stickney's gift as a preacher was found to be less striking

on a more extended acquaintance; and the Rev. Mr. Smith, a distinguished minister much sought after in the iron districts, with a talent for poetry, became objectionable from an inclination to exchange verses with the young ladies of his congregation. It was reasonably argued that such verses as Mr. Smith's must take a long time for their composition, and the habit alluded to might intrench seriously on his pastoral duties. These reverend gentlemen, one and all, gave it as their opinion that the Salem church members were among the least enlightened of the Lord's people, and that Milby was a low place, where they would have found it a severe lot to have their lines fall for any long period; though to see the smart and crowded congregation assembled on occasion of the annual charity sermon, any one might have supposed that the minister of Salem had rather a brilliant position in the ranks of Dissent. Several Church families used to attend on that occasion, for Milby, in those uninstructed days, had not yet heard that the schismatic ministers of Salem were obviously typified by Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and many Church people there were of opinion that Dissent might be a weakness, but, after all, had no great harm in it. These lax Episcopalians were, I believe, chiefly tradespeople, who held that, inasmuch as Congregationalism consumed candles, it ought to be supported, and accordingly made a point of presenting themselves at Salem for the afternoon charity sermon, with the expectation of being asked to hold a plate. Mr. Pilgrim, too, was always there with his half-sovereign; for as there was no Dissenting doctor in Milby, Mr. Pilgrim looked with great tolerance on all shades of religious opinion that did not include a belief in cures by miracle.

On this point he had the concurrence of Mr. Pratt, the only other medical man of the same standing in Milby. Otherwise, it was remarkable how strongly these two clever men were contrasted. Pratt was middle-sized, insinuating, and silvery-voiced; Pilgrim was tall, heavy, rough-mannered, and spluttering. Both were considered to have great powers of conversation, but Pratt's anecdotes were of the fine old crusted quality to be procured only of Joe Miller; Pilgrim's

had the full fruity flavor of the most recent scandal. Pratt elegantly referred all diseases to debility, and, with a proper contempt for symptomatic treatment, went to the root of the matter with port-wine and bark; Pilgrim was persuaded that the evil principle in the human system was plethora, and he made war against it with cupping, blistering, and cathartics. They had both been long established in Milby, and as each had a sufficient practice, there was no very malignant rivalry between them; on the contrary, they had that sort of friendly contempt for each other which is always conducive to a good understanding between professional men; and when any new surgeon attempted, in an ill-advised hour, to settle himself in the town, it was strikingly demonstrated how slight and trivial are theoretic differences compared with the broad basis of common human feeling. There was the most perfect unanimity between Pratt and Pilgrim in the determination to drive away the obnoxious and too probably unqualified intruder as soon as possible. Whether the first wonderful cure he effected was on a patient of Pratt's or of Pilgrim's, one was as ready as the other to pull the interloper by the nose, and both alike directed their remarkable powers of conversation towards making the town too hot for him. But by their respective patients these two distinguished men were pitted against each other with great virulence. Mrs. Lowme could not conceal her amazement that Mrs. Phipps should trust her life in the hands of Pratt, who let her feed herself up to that degree, it was really shocking to hear how short her breath was; and Mrs. Phipps had no patience with Mrs. Lowme, living, as she did, on tea and broth, and looking as yellow as any crow-flower, and yet letting Pilgrim bleed and blister her and give her lowering medicine till her clothes hung on her like a scarecrow's. On the whole, perhaps, Mr. Pilgrim's reputation was at the higher pitch, and when any lady under Mr. Pratt's care was doing ill, she was half disposed to think that a little more "active treatment" might suit her better. But without very definite provocation no one would take so serious a step as to part with the family doctor, for in those remote days there were few varieties of human hatred more formid-

able than the medical. The doctor's estimate, even of a confiding patient, was apt to rise and fall with the entries in the day-book; and I have known Mr. Pilgrim discover the most unexpected virtues in a patient seized with a promising illness. At such times you might have been glad to perceive that there were some of Mr. Pilgrim's fellow-creatures of whom he entertained a high opinion, and that he was liable to the amiable weakness of a too admiring estimate. A good inflammation fired his enthusiasm, and a lingering dropsy dissolved him into charity. Doubtless this *crescendo* of benevolence was partly due to feelings not at all represented by the entries in the day-book; for in Mr. Pilgrim's heart, too, there was a latent store of tenderness and pity which flowed forth at the sight of suffering. Gradually, however, as his patients became convalescent, his view of their characters became more dispassionate; when they could relish mutton-chops, he began to admit that they had foibles, and by the time they had swallowed their last dose of tonic, he was alive to their most inexcusable faults. After this, the thermometer of his regard rested at the moderate point of friendly backbiting, which sufficed to make him agreeable in his morning visits to the amiable and worthy persons who were yet far from convalescent.

Pratt's patients were profoundly uninteresting to Pilgrim: their very diseases were despicable, and he would hardly have thought their bodies worth dissecting. But of all Pratt's patients, Mr. Jerome was the one on whom Mr. Pilgrim heaped the most unmitigated contempt. In spite of the surgeon's wise tolerance, Dissent became odious to him in the person of Mr. Jerome. Perhaps it was because that old gentleman, being rich, and having very large yearly bills for medical attendance on himself and his wife, nevertheless employed Pratt — neglected all the advantages of "active treatment," and paid away his money without getting his system lowered. On any other ground it is hard to explain a feeling of hostility to Mr. Jerome, who was an excellent old gentleman, expressing a great deal of good-will towards his neighbors, not only in imperfect English, but in loans of money to the ostensibly rich and in sacks of potatoes to the obviously poor.

Assuredly Milby had that salt of goodness which keeps the world together, in greater abundance than was visible on the surface: innocent babes were born there, sweetening their parents' hearts with simple joys; men and women withering in disappointed worldliness, or bloated with sensual ease, had better moments in which they pressed the hand of suffering with sympathy, and were moved to deeds of neighborly kindness. In church and in chapel there were honest-hearted worshippers who strove to keep a conscience void of offence; and even up the dimmest alleys you might have found here and there a Wesleyan to whom Methodism was the vehicle of peace on earth and good-will to men. To a superficial glance, Milby was nothing but dreary prose: a dingy town, surrounded by flat fields, lopped elms, and sprawling manufacturing villages, which crept on and on with their weaving-shops, till they threatened to graft themselves on the town. But the sweet spring came to Milby notwithstanding: the elm-tops were red with buds; the church-yard was starred with daisies; the lark showered his love-music on the flat fields; the rainbows hung over the dingy town, clothing the very roofs and chimneys in a strange transfiguring beauty. And so it was with the human life there, which at first seemed a dismal mixture of griping worldliness, vanity, ostrich-feathers, and the fumes of brandy: looking closer, you found some purity, gentleness, and unselfishness, as you may have observed a scented geranium giving forth its wholesome odors amidst blasphemy and gin in a noisy pot-house. Little deaf Mrs. Crewe would often carry half her own spare dinner to the sick and hungry; Miss Phipps, with her cockade of red feathers, had a filial heart, and lighted her father's pipe with a pleasant smile; and there were gray-haired men in drab gaiters, not at all noticeable as you passed them in the street, whose integrity had been the basis of their rich neighbor's wealth.

Such as the place was, the people there were entirely contented with it. They fancied life must be but a dull affair for that large portion of mankind who were necessarily shut out from an acquaintance with Milby families, and that it must be an advantage to London and Liverpool that Milby gentlemen

occasionally visited those places on business. But the inhabitants became more intensely conscious of the value they set upon all their advantages, when innovation made its appearance in the person of the Rev. Mr. Tryan, the new curate, at the chapel-of-ease on Paddiford Common. It was soon notorious in Milby that Mr. Tryan held peculiar opinions; that he preached extempore; that he was founding a religious lending library in his remote corner of the parish; that he expounded the Scriptures in cottages; and that his preaching was attracting the Dissenters, and filling the very aisles of his church. The rumor sprang up that Evangelicalism had invaded Milby parish — a murrain or blight all the more terrible, because its nature was but dimly conjectured. Perhaps Milby was one of the last spots to be reached by the wave of a new movement; and it was only now, when the tide was just on the turn, that the limpets there got a sprinkling. Mr. Tryan was the first Evangelical clergyman who had risen above the Milby horizon: hitherto that obnoxious adjective had been unknown to the townspeople of any gentility; and there were even many Dissenters who considered "evangelical" simply a sort of baptismal name to the magazine which circulated among the congregation of Salem Chapel. But now, at length, the disease had been imported, when the parishioners were expecting it as little as the innocent Red Indians expected smallpox. As long as Mr. Tryan's hearers were confined to Paddiford Common — which, by the bye, was hardly recognizable as a common at all, but was a dismal district where you heard the rattle of the hand-loom, and breathed the smoke of coal-pits — the "canting parson" could be treated as a joke. Not so when a number of single ladies in the town appeared to be infected, and even one or two men of substantial property, with old Mr. Landor, the banker, at their head, seemed to be "giving in" to the new movement — when Mr. Tryan was known to be well received in several good houses, where he was in the habit of finishing the evening with exhortation and prayer. Evangelicalism was no longer a nuisance existing merely in by-corners, which any well-clad person could avoid; it was invading the very drawing-rooms, mingling

itself with the comfortable fumes of port-wine and brandy, threatening to deaden with its murky breath all the splendor of the ostrich-feathers, and to stifle Milby ingenuousness, not pretending to be better than its neighbors, with a cloud of cant and lugubrious hypocrisy. The alarm reached its climax when it was reported that Mr. Tryan was endeavoring to obtain authority from Mr. Prendergast, the non-resident rector, to establish a Sunday evening lecture in the parish church, on the ground that old Mr. Crewe did not preach the Gospel.

It now first appeared how surprisingly high a value Milby in general set on the ministrations of Mr. Crewe; how convinced it was that Mr. Crewe was the model of a parish priest, and his sermons the soundest and most edifying that had ever remained unheard by a church-going population. All allusions to his brown wig were suppressed, and by a rhetorical figure his name was associated with venerable gray hairs; the attempted intrusion of Mr. Tryan was an insult to a man deep in years and learning; moreover, it was an insolent effort to thrust himself forward in a parish where he was clearly distasteful to the superior portion of its inhabitants. The town was divided into two zealous parties, the Tryanites and anti-Tryanites; and by the exertions of the eloquent Dempster, the anti-Tryanite virulence was soon developed into an organized opposition. A protest against the meditated evening lecture was framed by that orthodox attorney, and, after being numerously signed, was to be carried to Mr. Prendergast by three delegates representing the intellect, morality, and wealth of Milby. The intellect, you perceive, was to be personified in Mr. Dempster, the morality in Mr. Budd, and the wealth in Mr. Tomlinson; and the distinguished triad was to set out on its great mission, as we have seen, on the third day from that warm Saturday evening when the conversation recorded in the previous chapter took place in the bar of the Red Lion.

CHAPTER III.

It was quite as warm on the following Thursday evening, when Mr. Dempster and his colleagues were to return from their mission to Elmstoke Rectory; but it was much pleasanter in Mrs. Linnet's parlor than in the bar of the Red Lion. Through the open window came the scent of mignonette and honeysuckle; the grass-plot in front of the house was shaded by a little plantation of Gueldres roses, syringas, and laburnums; the noise of looms and carts and unmelodious voices reached the ear simply as an agreeable murmur, for Mrs. Linnet's house was situated quite on the outskirts of Paddiford Common; and the only sound likely to disturb the serenity of the feminine party assembled there, was the occasional buzz of intrusive wasps, apparently mistaking each lady's head for a sugar-basin. No sugar-basin was visible in Mrs. Linnet's parlor, for the time of tea was not yet, and the round table was littered with books which the ladies were covering with black canvas as a reinforcement of the new Paddiford Lending Library. Miss Linnet, whose manuscript was the neatest type of zigzag, was seated at a small table apart, writing on green paper tickets, which were to be pasted on the covers. Miss Linnet had other accomplishments besides that of a neat manuscript, and an index to some of them might be found in the ornaments of the room. She had always combined a love of serious and poetical reading with her skill in fancy-work, and the neatly bound copies of Dryden's "Virgil," Hannah More's "Sacred Dramas," Falconer's "Shipwreck," Mason "On Self-Knowledge," "Rasselas," and Burke "On the Sublime and Beautiful," which were the chief ornaments of the bookcase, were all inscribed with her name, and had been bought with her pocket-money when she was in her teens. It must have been at least fifteen years since the latest of those purchases, but Miss Linnet's skill in fancy-work

appeared to have gone through more numerous phases than her literary taste; for the japanned boxes, the alum and sealing-wax baskets, the fan-dolls, the "transferred" landscapes on the fire-screens, and the recent bouquets of wax-flowers, showed a disparity in freshness which made them referable to widely different periods. Wax-flowers presuppose delicate fingers and robust patience, but there are still many points of mind and person which they leave vague and problematic; so I must tell you that Miss Linnet had dark ringlets, a sallow complexion, and an amiable disposition. As to her features, there was not much to criticise in them, for she had little nose, less lip, and no eyebrow; and as to her intellect, her friend Mrs. Pettifer often said: "She did n't know a more sensible person to talk to than Mary Linnet. There was no one she liked better to come and take a quiet cup of tea with her, and read a little of Klopstock's 'Messiah.' Mary Linnet had often told her a great deal of her mind when they were sitting together: she said there were many things to bear in every condition of life, and nothing should induce her to marry without a prospect of happiness. Once, when Mrs. Pettifer admired her wax-flowers, she said, 'Ah, Mrs. Pettifer, think of the beauties of nature!' She always spoke very prettily, did Mary Linnet; very different, indeed, from Rebecca."

Miss Rebecca Linnet, indeed, was not a general favorite. While most people thought it a pity that a sensible woman like Mary had not found a good husband — and even her female friends said nothing more ill-natured of her, than that her face was like a piece of putty with two Scotch pebbles stuck in it — Rebecca was always spoken of sarcastically, and it was a customary kind of banter with young ladies to recommend her as a wife to any gentleman they happened to be flirting with — her fat, her finery, and her thick ankles sufficing to give piquancy to the joke, notwithstanding the absence of novelty. Miss Rebecca, however, possessed the accomplishment of music, and her singing of "Oh no, we never mention her," and "The Soldier's Tear," was so desirable an accession to the pleasures of a tea-party that no one cared to offend her, especially as Rebecca had a high spirit of her own, and in

spite of her expansively rounded contour, had a particularly sharp tongue. Her reading had been more extensive than her sister's, embracing most of the fiction in Mr. Procter's circulating library; and nothing but an acquaintance with the course of her studies could afford a clew to the rapid transitions in her dress, which were suggested by the style of beauty, whether sentimental, sprightly, or severe, possessed by the heroine of the three volumes actually in perusal. A piece of lace, which drooped round the edge of her white bonnet one week, had been rejected by the next; and her cheeks, which, on Whitsunday, loomed through a Turnerian haze of network, were, on Trinity Sunday, seen reposing in distinct red outline on her shelving bust, like the sun on a fog-bank. The black velvet, meeting with a crystal clasp, which one evening encircled her head, had on another descended to her neck, and on a third to her wrist, suggesting to an active imagination either a magical contraction of the ornament, or a fearful ratio of expansion in Miss Rebecca's person. With this constant application of art to dress, she could have had little time for fancy-work, even if she had not been destitute of her sister's taste for that delightful and truly feminine occupation. And here, at least, you perceive the justice of the Milby opinion as to the relative suitability of the two Miss Linnets for matrimony. When a man is happy enough to win the affections of a sweet girl, who can soothe his cares with crochet, and respond to all his most cherished ideas with beaded urn-rugs and chair-covers in German wool, he has, at least, a guarantee of domestic comfort, whatever trials may await him out of doors. What a resource it is under fatigue and irritation to have your drawing-room well supplied with small mats, which would always be ready if you ever wanted to set anything on them! And what styptic for a bleeding heart can equal copious squares of crochet, which are useful for slipping down the moment you touch them? How our fathers managed without crochet is the wonder; but I believe some small and feeble substitute existed in their time under the name of "tatting." Rebecca Linnet, however, had neglected tatting as well as other forms

of fancy-work. At school, to be sure, she had spent a great deal of time in acquiring flower-painting, according to the ingenious method then fashionable, of applying the shapes of leaves and flowers cut out in cardboard, and scrubbing a brush over the surface thus conveniently marked out; but even the spill-cases and hand-screens which were her last half-year's performances in that way were not considered eminently successful, and had long been consigned to the retirement of the best bedroom. Thus there was a good deal of family unlikeness between Rebecca and her sister, and I am afraid there was also a little family dislike; but Mary's disapproval had usually been kept imprisoned behind her thin lips, for Rebecca was not only of a headstrong disposition, but was her mother's pet; the old lady being herself stout, and preferring a more showy style of cap than she could prevail on her daughter Mary to make up for her.

But I have been describing Miss Rebecca as she was in former days only, for her appearance this evening, as she sits pasting on the green tickets, is in striking contrast with what it was three or four months ago. Her plain gray gingham dress and plain white collar could never have belonged to her wardrobe before that date; and though she is not reduced in size, and her brown hair will do nothing but hang in crisp ringlets down her large cheeks, there is a change in her air and expression which seems to shed a softened light over her person, and make her look like a peony in the shade, instead of the same flower flaunting in a parterre in the hot sunlight.

No one could deny that Evangelicalism had wrought a change for the better in Rebecca Linnet's person — not even Miss Pratt, the thin stiff lady in spectacles, seated opposite to her, who always had a peculiar repulsion for "females with a gross habit of body." Miss Pratt was an old maid; but that is a no more definite description than if I had said she was in the autumn of life. Was it autumn when the orchards are fragrant with apples, or autumn when the oaks are brown, or autumn when the last yellow leaves are fluttering in the chill breeze? The young ladies in Milby would have told you that the Miss Linnets were old maids; but the Miss Linnets were

to Miss Pratt what the apple-scented September is to the bare, nipping days of late November. The Miss Linnets were in that temperate zone of old-maidism, when a woman will not say but that if a man of suitable years and character were to offer himself, she might be induced to tread the remainder of life's vale in company with him; Miss Pratt was in that arctic region where a woman is confident that at no time of life would she have consented to give up her liberty, and that she has never seen the man whom she would engage to honor and obey. If the Miss Linnets were old maids, they were old maids with natural ringlets and *embonpoint*, not to say obesity; Miss Pratt was an old maid with a cap, a braided "front," a backbone and appendages. Miss Pratt was the one blue-stocking of Milby, possessing, she said, no less than five hundred volumes, competent, as her brother the doctor often observed, to conduct a conversation on any topic whatever, and occasionally dabbling a little in authorship, though it was understood that she had never put forth the full powers of her mind in print. Her "Letters to a Young Man on his Entrance into Life," and "De Courcy, or the Rash Promise, a Tale for Youth," were mere trifles which she had been induced to publish because they were calculated for popular utility, but they were nothing to what she had for years had by her in manuscript. Her latest production had been Six Stanzas, addressed to the Rev. Edgar Tryan, printed on glazed paper with a neat border, and beginning, "Forward, young wrestler for the truth!"

Miss Pratt having kept her brother's house during his long widowhood, his daughter, Miss Eliza, had had the advantage of being educated by her aunt, and thus of imbibing a very strong antipathy to all that remarkable woman's tastes and opinions. The silent handsome girl of two-and-twenty who is covering the "Memoirs of Felix Neff," is Miss Eliza Pratt; and the small elderly lady in dowdy clothing, who is also working diligently, is Mrs. Pettifer, a superior-minded widow, much valued in Milby, being such a very respectable person to have in the house in case of illness, and of quite too good a family to receive any money-payment — you could always send her garden-stuff that would make her ample amends.

Miss Pratt has enough to do in commenting on the heap of volumes before her, feeling it a responsibility entailed on her by her great powers of mind to leave nothing without the advantage of her opinion. Whatever was good must be sprinkled with the chrism of her approval; whatever was evil must be blighted by her condemnation.

"Upon my word," she said, in a deliberate high voice, as if she were dictating to an amanuensis, "it is a most admirable selection of works for popular reading, this that our excellent Mr. Tryan has made. I do not know whether, if the task had been confided to me, I could have made a selection, combining in a higher degree religious instruction and edification with a due admixture of the purer species of amusement. This story of 'Father Clement' is a library in itself on the errors of Romanism. I have ever considered fiction a suitable form for conveying moral and religious instruction, as I have shown in my little work 'De Courcy,' which, as a very clever writer in the 'Crompton Argus' said at the time of its appearance, is the light vehicle of a weighty moral."

"One 'ud think," said Mrs. Linnet, who also had her spectacles on, but chiefly for the purpose of seeing what the others were doing, "there did n't want much to drive people away from a religion as makes 'em walk barefoot over stone floors, like that girl in 'Father Clement' — sending the blood up to the head frightful. Anybody might see that was an unnat'ral creed."

"Yes," said Miss Pratt, "but asceticism is not the root of the error, as Mr. Tryan was telling us the other evening — it is the denial of the great doctrine of justification by faith. Much as I had reflected on all subjects in the course of my life, I am indebted to Mr. Tryan for opening my eyes to the full importance of that cardinal doctrine of the Reformation. From a child I had a deep sense of religion, but in my early days the Gospel light was obscured in the English Church, notwithstanding the possession of our incomparable Liturgy, than which I know no human composition more faultless and sublime. As I tell Eliza, I was not blest as she is at the age of two-and-twenty, in knowing a clergyman who unites all that

is great and admirable in intellect with the highest spiritual gifts. I am no contemptible judge of a man's acquirements, and I assure you I have tested Mr. Tryan's by questions which are a pretty severe touchstone. It is true, I sometimes carry him a little beyond the depth of the other listeners. Profound learning," continued Miss Pratt, shutting her spectacles, and tapping them on the book before her, "has not many to estimate it in Milby."

"Miss Pratt," said Rebecca, "will you please give me 'Scott's Force of Truth'? There — that small book lying against the 'Life of Legh Richmond.'"

"That's a book I'm very fond of — the 'Life of Legh Richmond,'" said Mrs. Linnet. "He found out all about that woman at Tutbury as pretended to live without eating. Stuff and nonsense!"

Mrs. Linnet had become a reader of religious books since Mr. Tryan's advent, and as she was in the habit of confining her perusal to the purely secular portions, which bore a very small proportion to the whole, she could make rapid progress through a large number of volumes. On taking up the biography of a celebrated preacher, she immediately turned to the end to see what disease he died of; and if his legs swelled, as her own occasionally did, she felt a stronger interest in ascertaining any earlier facts in the history of the dropsical divine — whether he had ever fallen off a stage-coach, whether he had married more than one wife, and, in general, any adventures or repartees recorded of him previous to the epoch of his conversion. She then glanced over the letters and diary, and wherever there was a predominance of Zion, the River of Life, and notes of exclamation, she turned over to the next page; but any passage in which she saw such promising nouns as "smallpox," "pony," or "boots and shoes," at once arrested her.

"It is half-past six now," said Miss Linnet, looking at her watch as the servant appeared with the tea-tray. "I suppose the delegates are come back by this time. If Mr. Tryan had not so kindly promised to call and let us know, I should hardly rest without walking to Milby myself to know what answer

they have brought back. It is a great privilege for us, Mr. Tryan living at Mrs. Wagstaff's, for he is often able to take us on his way backwards and forwards into the town."

"I wonder if there 's another man in the world who has been brought up as Mr. Tryan has, that would choose to live in those small close rooms on the common, among heaps of dirty cottages, for the sake of being near the poor people." said Mrs. Pettifer. "I 'm afraid he hurts his health by it; he looks to me far from strong."

"Ah," said Miss Pratt, "I understand he is of a highly respectable family indeed, in Huntingdonshire. I heard him myself speak of his father's carriage — quite incidentally, you know — and Eliza tells me what very fine cambric handkerchiefs he uses. My eyes are not good enough to see such things, but I know what breeding is as well as most people, and it is easy to see that Mr. Tryan is quite *comme il faw*, to use a French expression."

"I should like to tell him better nor use fine cambric i' this place, where there 's such washing, it 's a shame to be seen," said Mrs. Linnet; "he 'll get 'em tore to pieces. Good lawn 'ud be far better. I saw what a color his linen looked at the sacrament last Sunday. Mary 's making him a black silk case to hold his bands, but I told her she 'd more need wash 'em for him."

"Oh, mother!" said Rebecca, with a solemn severity, "pray don't think of pocket-handkerchiefs and linen, when we are talking of such a man. And at this moment, too, when he is perhaps having to bear a heavy blow. We don't know but wickedness may have triumphed, and Mr. Prendergast may have consented to forbid the lecture. There have been dispensations quite as mysterious, and Satan is evidently putting forth all his strength to resist the entrance of the Gospel into Milby Church."

"You niver spoke a truer word than that, my dear," said Mrs. Linnet, who accepted all religious phrases, but was extremely rationalistic in her interpretation; "for if iver Old Harry appeared in a human form, it 's that Dempster. It was all through him as we got cheated out o' Pye's Croft, making

out as the title was n't good. Such lawyer's villany! As if paying good money was n't title enough to anything. If your father as is dead and gone had been worthy to know it! But he 'll have a fall some day, Dempster will. Mark my words."

"Ah, out of his carriage, you mean," said Miss Pratt, who, in the movement occasioned by the clearing of the table, had lost the first part of Mrs. Linnet's speech. "It certainly is alarming to see him driving home from Rotherby, flogging his galloping horse like a madman. My brother has often said he expected every Thursday evening to be called in to set some of Dempster's bones; but I suppose he may drop that expectation now, for we are given to understand from good authority that he has forbidden his wife to call my brother in again either to herself or her mother. He swears no Tryanite doctor shall attend his family. I have reason to believe that Pilgrim was called in to Mrs. Dempster's mother the other day."

"Poor Mrs. Raynor! she 's glad to do anything for the sake of peace and quietness," said Mrs. Pettifer; "but it's no trifle at her time of life to part with a doctor who knows her constitution."

"What trouble that poor woman has to bear in her old age!" said Mary Linnet, "to see her daughter leading such a life! — an only daughter, too, that she dotes on."

"Yes, indeed," said Miss Pratt. "We, of course, know more about it than most people, my brother having attended the family so many years. For my part, I never thought well of the marriage; and I endeavored to dissuade my brother when Mrs. Raynor asked him to give Janet away at the wedding. 'If you will take my advice, Richard,' I said, 'you will have nothing to do with that marriage.' And he has seen the justice of my opinion since. Mrs. Raynor herself was against the connection at first; but she always spoiled Janet; and I fear, too, she was won over by a foolish pride in having her daughter marry a professional man. I fear it was so. No one but myself, I think, foresaw the extent of the evil."

"Well," said Mrs. Pettifer, "Janet had nothing to look to but being a governess; and it was hard for Mrs. Raynor to

have to work at millinering — a woman well brought up, and her husband a man who held his head as high as any man in Thurston. And it is n't everybody that sees everything fifteen years beforehand. Robert Dempster was the cleverest man in Milby; and there were n't many young men fit to talk to Janet."

"It is a thousand pities," said Miss Pratt, choosing to ignore Mrs. Pettifer's slight sarcasm, "for I certainly did consider Janet Raynor the most promising young woman of my acquaintance; — a little too much lifted up, perhaps, by her superior education, and too much given to satire, but able to express herself very well indeed about any book I recommended to her perusal. There is no young woman in Milby now who can be compared with what Janet was when she was married, either in mind or person. I consider Miss Landor far, far below her. Indeed, I cannot say much for the mental superiority of the young ladies in our first families. They are superficial — very superficial."

"She made the handsomest bride that ever came out of Milby church, too," said Mrs. Pettifer. "Such a very fine figure! and it showed off her white poplin so well. And what a pretty smile Janet always had! Poor thing, she keeps that now for all her old friends. I never see her but she has something pretty to say to me — living in the same street, you know, I can't help seeing her often, though I 've never been to the house since Dempster broke out on me in one of his drunken fits. She comes to me sometimes, poor thing, looking so strange, anybody passing her in the street may see plain enough what 's the matter; but she 's always got some little good-natured plan in her head for all that. Only last night when I met her, I saw five yards off she was n't fit to be out; but she had a basin in her hand, full of something she was carrying to Sally Martin, the deformed girl that 's in a consumption."

"But she is just as bitter against Mr. Tryan as her husband is, I understand," said Rebecca. "Her heart is very much set against the truth, for I understand she bought Mr. Tryan's sermons on purpose to ridicule them to Mrs. Crewe."

"Well, poor thing," said Mrs. Pettifer, "you know she stands up for everything her husband says and does. She never will admit to anybody that he's not a good husband."

"That is her pride," said Miss Pratt. "She married him in opposition to the advice of her best friends, and now she is not willing to admit that she was wrong. Why, even to my brother — and a medical attendant, you know, can hardly fail to be acquainted with family secrets — she has always pretended to have the highest respect for her husband's qualities. Poor Mrs. Raynor, however, is well aware that every one knows the real state of things. Latterly, she has not even avoided the subject with me. The very last time I called on her she said, 'Have you been to see my poor daughter?' and burst into tears."

"Pride or no pride," said Mrs. Pettifer, "I shall always stand up for Janet Dempster. She sat up with me night after night when I had that attack of rheumatic fever six years ago. There's great excuses for her. When a woman can't think of her husband coming home without trembling, it's enough to make her drink something to blunt her feelings — and no children either, to keep her from it. You and me might do the same, if we were in her place."

"Speak for yourself, Mrs. Pettifer," said Miss Pratt. "Under no circumstances can I imagine myself resorting to a practice so degrading. A woman should find support in her own strength of mind."

"I think," said Rebecca, who considered Miss Pratt still very blind in spiritual things, notwithstanding her assumption of enlightenment, "she will find poor support if she trusts only to her own strength. She must seek aid elsewhere than in herself."

Happily the removal of the tea-things just then created a little confusion, which aided Miss Pratt to repress her resentment at Rebecca's presumption in correcting her — a person like Rebecca Linnet! who six months ago was as flighty and vain a woman as Miss Pratt had ever known — so very unconscious of her unfortunate person!

The ladies had scarcely been seated at their work another

hour, when the sun was sinking, and the clouds that flecked the sky to the very zenith were every moment taking on a brighter gold. The gate of the little garden opened, and Miss Linnet, seated at her small table near the window, saw Mr. Tryan enter.

"There is Mr. Tryan," she said, and her pale cheek was lighted up with a little blush that would have made her look more attractive to almost any one except Miss Eliza Pratt, whose fine gray eyes allowed few things to escape her silent observation. "Mary Linnet gets more and more in love with Mr. Tryan," thought Miss Eliza; "it is really pitiable to see such feelings in a woman of her age, with those old-maidish little ringlets. I dare say she flatters herself Mr. Tryan may fall in love with her, because he makes her useful among the poor." At the same time, Miss Eliza, as she bent her handsome head and large cannon curls with apparent calmness over her work, felt a considerable internal flutter when she heard the knock at the door. Rebecca had less self-command. She felt too much agitated to go on with her pasting, and clutched the leg of the table to counteract the trembling in her hands.

Poor women's hearts! Heaven forbid that I should laugh at you, and make cheap jests on your susceptibility towards the clerical sex, as if it had nothing deeper or more lovely in it than the mere vulgar angling for a husband. Even in these enlightened days, many a curate who, considered abstractedly, is nothing more than a sleek bimanous animal in a white neckcloth, with views more or less Anglican, and furtively addicted to the flute, is adored by a girl who has coarse brothers, or by a solitary woman who would like to be a helpmate in good works beyond her own means, simply because he seems to them the model of refinement and of public usefulness. What wonder, then, that in Milby society, such as I have told you it was a very long while ago, a zealous evangelical clergyman, aged thirty-three, called forth all the little agitations that belong to the divine necessity of loving, implanted in the Miss Linnets, with their seven or eight lustrums and their unfashionable ringlets, no less than in Miss Eliza Pratt, with her youthful bloom and her ample cannon curls.

But Mr. Tryan has entered the room, and the strange light from the golden sky falling on his light-brown hair, which is brushed high up round his head, makes it look almost like an aureole. His gray eyes, too, shine with unwonted brilliancy this evening. They were not remarkable eyes, but they accorded completely in their changing light with the changing expression of his person, which indicated the paradoxical character often observable in a large-limbed sanguine blond; at once mild and irritable, gentle and overbearing, indolent and resolute, self-conscious and dreamy. Except that the well-filled lips had something of the artificially compressed look which is often the sign of a struggle to keep the dragon undermost, and that the complexion was rather pallid, giving the idea of imperfect health, Mr. Tryan's face in repose was that of an ordinary whiskerless blond, and it seemed difficult to refer a certain air of distinction about him to anything in particular, unless it were his delicate hands and well-shapen feet.

It was a great anomaly to the Milby mind that a canting evangelical parson, who would take tea with tradespeople, and make friends of vulgar women like the Linnets, should have so much the air of a gentleman, and be so little like the splay-footed Mr. Stickney of Salem, to whom he approximated so closely in doctrine. And this want of correspondence between the physique and the creed had excited no less surprise in the larger town of Laxeter, where Mr. Tryan had formerly held a curacy; for of the two other Low Church clergymen in the neighborhood, one was a Welshman of globose figure and unctuous complexion, and the other a man of atrabiliar aspect, with lank black hair, and a redundance of limp cravat — in fact, the sort of thing you might expect in men who distributed the publications of the Religious Tract Society, and introduced Dissenting hymns into the Church.

Mr. Tryan shook hands with Mrs. Linnet, bowed with rather a preoccupied air to the other ladies, and seated himself in the large horse-hair easy-chair which had been drawn forward for him, while the ladies ceased from their work, and fixed their eyes on him, awaiting the news he had to tell them.

"It seems," he began, in a low and silvery tone, "I need a lesson of patience; there has been something wrong in my thought or action about this evening lecture. I have been too much bent on doing good to Milby after my own plan — too reliant on my own wisdom."

Mr. Tryan paused. He was struggling against inward irritation.

"The delegates are come back, then?" "Has Mr. Prendergast given way?" "Has Dempster succeeded?" — were the eager questions of three ladies at once.

"Yes; the town is in an uproar. As we were sitting in Mr. Landor's drawing-room we heard a loud cheering, and presently Mr. Thrupp, the clerk at the bank, who had been waiting at the Red Lion to hear the result, came to let us know. He said Dempster had been making a speech to the mob out of the window. They were distributing drink to the people, and hoisting placards in great letters, — 'Down with the Tryanites!' 'Down with cant!' They had a hideous caricature of me being tripped-up and pitched head-foremost out of the pulpit. Good old Mr. Landor would insist on sending me round in the carriage; he thought I should not be safe from the mob; but I got down at the Crossways. The row was evidently preconcerted by Dempster before he set out. He made sure of succeeding."

Mr. Tryan's utterance had been getting rather louder and more rapid in the course of this speech, and he now added, in the energetic chest-voice, which, both in and out of the pulpit, alternated continually with his more silvery notes —

"But his triumph will be a short one. If he thinks he can intimidate me by obloquy or threats, he has mistaken the man he has to deal with. Mr. Dempster and his colleagues will find themselves checkmated after all. Mr. Prendergast has been false to his own conscience in this business. He knows as well as I do that he is throwing away the souls of the people by leaving things as they are in the parish. But I shall appeal to the Bishop — I am confident of his sympathy."

"The Bishop will be coming shortly, I suppose," said Miss Pratt, "to hold a confirmation?"

"Yes; but I shall write to him at once, and lay the case before him. Indeed, I must hurry away now, for I have many matters to attend to. You, ladies, have been kindly helping me with your labors, I see," continued Mr. Tryan, politely, glancing at the canvas-covered books as he rose from his seat. Then, turning to Mary Linnet: "Our library is really getting on, I think. You and your sister have quite a heavy task of distribution now."

Poor Rebecca felt it very hard to bear that Mr. Tryan did not turn towards her too. If he knew how much she entered into his feelings about the lecture, and the interest she took in the library. Well! perhaps it was her lot to be overlooked — and it might be a token of mercy. Even a good man might not always know the heart that was most with him. But the next moment poor Mary had a pang, when Mr. Tryan turned to Miss Eliza Pratt, and the preoccupied expression of his face melted into that beaming timidity with which a man almost always addresses a pretty woman.

"I have to thank you, too, Miss Eliza, for seconding me so well in your visits to Joseph Mercer. The old man tells me how precious he finds your reading to him, now he is no longer able to go to church."

Miss Eliza only answered by a blush, which made her look all the handsomer, but her aunt said —

"Yes, Mr. Tryan, I have ever inculcated on my dear Eliza the importance of spending her leisure in being useful to her fellow-creatures. Your example and instruction have been quite in the spirit of the system which I have always pursued, though we are indebted to you for a clearer view of the motives that should actuate us in our pursuit of good works. Not that I can accuse myself of having ever had a self-righteous spirit, but my humility was rather instinctive than based on a firm ground of doctrinal knowledge, such as you so admirably impart to us."

Mrs. Linnet's usual entreaty that Mr. Tryan would "have something — some wine-and-water, and a biscuit," was just here a welcome relief from the necessity of answering Miss Pratt's oration.

"Not anything, my dear Mrs. Linnet, thank you. You forget what a Rechabite I am. By the bye, when I went this morning to see a poor girl in Butcher's Lane, whom I had heard of as being in a consumption, I found Mrs. Dempster there. I had often met her in the street, but did not know it was Mrs. Dempster. It seems she goes among the poor a good deal. She is really an interesting-looking woman. I was quite surprised, for I have heard the worst account of her habits — that she is almost as bad as her husband. She went out hastily as soon as I entered. But" (apologetically) "I am keeping you all standing, and I must really hurry away. Mrs. Pettifer, I have not had the pleasure of calling on you for some time; I shall take an early opportunity of going your way. Good evening, good evening."

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Tryan was right in saying that the "row" in Milby had been preconcerted by Dempster. The placards and the caricature were prepared before the departure of the delegates; and it had been settled that Mat Paine, Dempster's clerk, should ride out on Thursday morning to meet them at Whitlow, the last place where they would change horses, that he might gallop back and prepare an ovation for the triumvirate in case of their success. Dempster had determined to dine at Whitlow: so that Mat Paine was in Milby again two hours before the entrance of the delegates, and had time to send a whisper up the back streets that there was promise of a "spree" in the Bridge Way, as well as to assemble two knots of picked men — one to feed the flame of orthodox zeal with gin-and-water, at the Green Man, near High Street; the other to solidify their church principles with heady beer at the Bear and Ragged Staff in the Bridge Way.

The Bridge Way was an irregular straggling street, where the town fringed off raggedly into the Whitlow road: rows of

new red-brick houses, in which ribbon-looms were rattling behind long lines of window, alternating with old, half-thatched, half-tiled cottages — one of those dismal wide streets where dirt and misery have no long shadows thrown on them to soften their ugliness. Here, about half-past five o'clock, Silly Caleb, an idiot well known in Dog Lane, but more of a stranger in the Bridge Way, was seen slouching along with a string of boys hooting at his heels; presently another group, for the most part out at elbows, came briskly in the same direction, looking round them with an air of expectation; and at no long interval, Deb Traunter, in a pink flounced gown and floating ribbons, was observed talking with great affability to two men in seal-skin caps and fustian, who formed her cortége. The Bridge Way began to have a presentiment of something in the wind. Phib Cook left her evening wash-tub and appeared at her door in soap-suds, a bonnet-poke, and general dampness; three narrow-chested ribbon-weavers, in rusty black streaked with shreds of many-colored silk, sauntered out with their hands in their pockets; and Molly Beale, a brawny old virago, descrying wiry Dame Ricketts peeping out from her entry, seized the opportunity of renewing the morning's skirmish. In short, the Bridge Way was in that state of excitement which is understood to announce a "demonstration" on the part of the British public; and the afflux of remote townsmen increasing, there was soon so large a crowd that it was time for Bill Powers, a plethoric Goliath, who presided over the knot of beer-drinkers at the Bear and Ragged Staff, to issue forth with his companions, and, like the enunciator of the ancient myth, make the assemblage distinctly conscious of the common sentiment that had drawn them together. The expectation of the delegates' chaise, added to the fight between Molly Beale and Dame Ricketts, and the ill-advised appearance of a lean bull-terrier, were a sufficient safety-valve to the popular excitement during the remaining quarter of an hour; at the end of which the chaise was seen approaching along the Whitlow road, with oak boughs ornamenting the horses' heads; and, to quote the account of this interesting scene which was sent to the "Rotherby Guardian," "loud cheers immediately testified to the sym-

pathy of the honest fellows collected there, with the public-spirited exertions of their fellow-townsmen." Bill Powers, whose bloodshot eyes, bent hat, and protuberant altitude, marked him out as the natural leader of the assemblage, undertook to interpret the common sentiment by stopping the chaise, advancing to the door with raised hat, and begging to know of Mr. Dempster, whether the Rector had forbidden the "canting lecture."

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Dempster. "Keep up a jolly good hurray."

No public duty could have been more easy and agreeable to Mr. Powers and his associates, and the chorus swelled all the way to the High Street, where, by a mysterious coincidence often observable in these spontaneous "demonstrations," large placards on long poles were observed to shoot upwards from among the crowd, principally in the direction of Tucker's Lane, where the Green Man was situated. One bore, "Down with the Tryanites!" another, "No Cant!" another, "Long live our venerable Curate!" and one in still larger letters, "Sound Church principles and no Hypocrisy!" But a still more remarkable impromptu was a huge caricature of Mr. Tryan in gown and band, with an enormous aureole of yellow hair and upturned eyes, standing on the pulpit stairs and trying to pull down old Mr. Crewe. Groans, yells, and hisses — hisses, yells, and groans — only stemmed by the appearance of another caricature representing Mr. Tryan being pitched head-foremost from the pulpit stairs by a hand which the artist, either from subtilty of intention or want of space, had left unindicated. In the midst of the tremendous cheering that saluted this piece of symbolical art, the chaise had reached the door of the Red Lion, and loud cries of "Dempster forever!" with a feebler cheer now and then for Tomlinson and Budd, were presently responded to by the appearance of the public-spirited attorney at the large upper window, where also were visible a little in the background the small sleek head of Mr. Budd, and the blinking countenance of Mr. Tomlinson.

Mr. Dempster held his hat in his hand, and poked his head forward with a butting motion by way of bow. A storm of

cheers subsided at last into dropping sounds of "Silence!" "Hear him!" "Go it, Dempster!" and the lawyer's rasping voice became distinctly audible.

"Fellow-townsmen! It gives us the sincerest pleasure — I speak for my respected colleagues as well as myself — to witness these strong proofs of your attachment to the principles of our excellent Church, and your zeal for the honor of our venerable pastor. But it is no more than I expected of you. I know you well. I've known you for the last twenty years to be as honest and respectable a set of rate-payers as any in this county. Your hearts are sound to the core! No man had better try to thrust his cant and hypocrisy down *your* throats. You're used to wash them with liquor of a better flavor. This is the proudest moment in my own life, and I think I may say in that of my colleagues, in which I have to tell you that our exertions in the cause of sound religion and manly morality have been crowned with success. Yes, my fellow-townsmen! I have the gratification of announcing to you thus formally what you have already learned indirectly. The pulpit from which our venerable pastor has fed us with sound doctrine for half a century is not to be invaded by a fanatical, sectarian, double-faced, Jesuitical interloper! We are not to have our young people demoralized and corrupted by the temptations to vice, notoriously connected with Sunday evening lectures! We are not to have a preacher obtruding himself upon us, who decries good works, and sneaks into our homes perverting the faith of our wives and daughters! We are not to be poisoned with doctrines which damp every innocent enjoyment, and pick a poor man's pocket of the sixpence with which he might buy himself a cheerful glass after a hard day's work, under pretence of paying for bibles to send to the Chicktaws!

"But I'm not going to waste your valuable time with unnecessary words. I am a man of deeds" ("Ay, damn you, that you are, and you charge well for 'em too," said a voice from the crowd, probably that of a gentleman who was immediately afterwards observed with his hat crushed over his head). "I shall always be at the service of my fellow-towns-

men, and whoever dares to hector over you, or interfere with your innocent pleasures, shall have an account to settle with Robert Dempster.

"Now, my boys! you can't do better than disperse and carry the good news to all your fellow-townsmen, whose hearts are as sound as your own. Let some of you go one way and some another, that every man, woman, and child in Milby may know what you know yourselves. But before we part, let us have three cheers for True Religion, and down with Cant!"

When the last cheer was dying, Mr. Dempster closed the window, and the judiciously instructed placards and caricatures moved off in divers directions, followed by larger or smaller divisions of the crowd. The greatest attraction apparently lay in the direction of Dog Lane, the outlet towards Paddiford Common, whither the caricatures were moving; and you foresee, of course, that those works of symbolical art were consumed with a liberal expenditure of dry gorse-bushes and vague shouting.

After these great public exertions, it was natural that Mr. Dempster and his colleagues should feel more in need than usual of a little social relaxation; and a party of their friends was already beginning to assemble in the large parlor of the Red Lion, convened partly by their own curiosity, and partly by the invaluable Mat Paine. The most capacious punch-bowl was put in requisition; and that born gentleman, Mr. Lowme, seated opposite Mr. Dempster as "Vice," undertook to brew the punch, defying the criticisms of the envious men out of office, who, with the readiness of irresponsibility, ignorantly suggested more lemons. The social festivities were continued till long past midnight, when several friends of sound religion were conveyed home with some difficulty, one of them showing a dogged determination to seat himself in the gutter.

Mr. Dempster had done as much justice to the punch as any of the party; and his friend Boots, though aware that the lawyer could "carry his liquor like Old Nick," with whose social demeanor Boots seemed to be particularly well acquainted, nevertheless thought it might be as well to see so good a customer in safety to his own door, and walked quietly

behind his elbow out of the inn-yard. Dempster, however, soon became aware of him, stopped short, and, turning slowly round upon him, recognized the well-known drab waistcoat sleeves, conspicuous enough in the starlight.

"You twopenny scoundrel! What do you mean by dogging a professional man's footsteps in this way? I'll break every bone in your skin if you attempt to track me, like a beastly cur sniffing at one's pocket. Do you think a gentleman will make his way home any the better for having the scent of your blacking-bottle thrust up his nostrils?"

Boots slunk back, in more amusement than ill-humor, thinking the lawyer's "rum talk" was doubtless part and parcel of his professional ability; and Mr. Dempster pursued his slow way alone.

His house lay in Orchard Street, which opened on the prettiest outskirt of the town — the church, the parsonage, and a long stretch of green fields. It was an old-fashioned house, with an overhanging upper storey; outside, it had a face of rough stucco, and casement windows with green frames and shutters; inside, it was full of long passages, and rooms with low ceilings. There was a large heavy knocker on the green door, and though Mr. Dempster carried a latch-key, he sometimes chose to use the knocker. He chose to do so now. The thunder resounded through Orchard Street, and, after a single minute, there was a second clap louder than the first. Another minute, and still the door was not opened; whereupon Mr. Dempster, muttering, took out his latch-key, and, with less difficulty than might have been expected, thrust it into the door. When he opened the door the passage was dark.

"Janet!" in the loudest rasping tone, was the next sound that rang through the house.

"Janet!" again — before a slow step was heard on the stairs, and a distant light began to flicker on the wall of the passage.

"Curse you! you creeping idiot! Come faster, can't you?"

Yet a few seconds, and the figure of a tall woman, holding aslant a heavy-plated drawing-room candlestick, appeared at the turning of the passage that led to the broader entrance.

She had on a light dress which sat loosely about her figure, but did not disguise its liberal, graceful outline. A heavy mass of straight jet-black hair had escaped from its fastening, and hung over her shoulders. Her grandly cut features, pale with the natural paleness of a brunette, had premature lines about them, telling that the years had been lengthened by sorrow, and the delicately curved nostril, which seemed made to quiver with the proud consciousness of power and beauty, must have quivered to the heart-piercing griefs which had given that worn look to the corners of the mouth. Her wide-open black eyes had a strangely fixed, sightless gaze, as she paused at the turning, and stood silent before her husband.

"I 'll teach you to keep me waiting in the dark, you pale staring fool!" he said, advancing with his slow drunken step. "What, you 've been drinking again, have you? I 'll beat you into your senses."

He laid his hand with a firm gripe on her shoulder, turned her round, and pushed her slowly before him along the passage and through the dining-room door, which stood open on their left hand.

There was a portrait of Janet's mother, a gray-haired, dark-eyed old woman, in a neatly fluted cap, hanging over the mantel-piece. Surely the aged eyes take on a look of anguish as they see Janet — not trembling, no! it would be better if she trembled — standing stupidly unmoved in her great beauty, while the heavy arm is lifted to strike her. The blow falls — another — and another. Surely the mother hears that cry — "Oh, Robert! pity! pity!"

Poor gray-haired woman! Was it for this you suffered a mother's pangs in your lone widowhood five-and-thirty years ago? Was it for this you kept the little worn morocco shoes Janet had first run in, and kissed them day by day when she was away from you, a tall girl at school? Was it for this you looked proudly at her when she came back to you in her rich pale beauty, like a tall white arum that has just unfolded its grand pure curves to the sun?

The mother lies sleepless and praying in her lonely house,

weeping the difficult tears of age, because she dreads this may be a cruel night for her child.

She too has a picture over her mantel-piece, drawn in chalk by Janet long years ago. She looked at it before she went to bed. It is a head bowed beneath a cross, and wearing a crown of thorns.

CHAPTER V.

It was half-past nine o'clock in the morning. The mild summer sun was already warm on the roofs and weathercocks of Milby. The church-bells were ringing, and many families were conscious of Sunday sensations, chiefly referable to the fact that the daughters had come down to breakfast in their best frocks, and with their hair particularly well dressed. For it was not Sunday, but Wednesday; and though the Bishop was going to hold a Confirmation, and to decide whether or not there should be a Sunday evening lecture in Milby, the sunbeams had the usual working-day look to the haymakers already long out in the fields, and to laggard weavers just "setting up" their week's "piece." The notion of its being Sunday was the strongest in young ladies like Miss Phipps, who was going to accompany her younger sister to the confirmation, and to wear a "sweetly pretty" transparent bonnet with marabout feathers on the interesting occasion, thus throwing into relief the suitable simplicity of her sister's attire, who was, of course, to appear in a new white frock; or in the pupils at Miss Townley's, who were absolved from all lessons, and were going to church to see the Bishop, and to hear the Honorable and Reverend Mr. Prendergast, the rector, read prayers — a high intellectual treat, as Miss Townley assured them. It seemed only natural that a rector, who was honorable, should read better than old Mr. Crewe, who was only a curate, and not honorable; and when little Clara Robins won

dered why some clergymen were rectors and others not, Ellen Marriott assured her with great confidence that it was only the clever men who were made rectors. Ellen Marriott was going to be confirmed. She was a short, fair, plump girl, with blue eyes and sandy hair, which was this morning arranged in taller cannon curls than usual, for the reception of the Episcopal benediction, and some of the young ladies thought her the prettiest girl in the school; but others gave the preference to her rival, Maria Gardner, who was much taller, and had a lovely "crop" of dark-brown ringlets, and who, being also about to take upon herself the vows made in her name at her baptism, had oiled and twisted her ringlets with especial care. As she seated herself at the breakfast-table before Miss Townley's entrance to dispense the weak coffee, her crop excited so strong a sensation that Ellen Marriott was at length impelled to look at it, and to say with suppressed but bitter sarcasm, Is that Miss Gardner's head?" "Yes," said Maria, amiable and stuttering, and no match for Ellen in retort; "th— th— this is my head." "Then I don't admire it at all!" was the crushing rejoinder of Ellen, followed by a murmur of approval among her friends. Young ladies, I suppose, exhaust their sac of venom in this way at school. That is the reason why they have such a harmless tooth for each other in after life.

The only other candidate for confirmation at Miss Townley's was Mary Dunn, a draper's daughter in Milby and a distant relation of the Miss Linnets. Her pale lanky hair could never be coaxed into permanent curl, and this morning the heat had brought it down to its natural condition of lankiness earlier than usual. But that was not what made her sit melancholy and apart at the lower end of the form. Her parents were admirers of Mr. Tryan, and had been persuaded, by the Miss Linnets' influence, to insist that their daughter should be prepared for confirmation by him, over and above the preparation given to Miss Townley's pupils by Mr. Crewe. Poor Mary Dunn! I am afraid she thought it too heavy a price to pay for these spiritual advantages, to be excluded from every game at ball, to be obliged to walk with none but little girls — in fact, to be the object of an aversion that nothing short of an

incessant supply of plumcakes would have neutralized. And Mrs. Dunn was of opinion that plumcake was unwholesome. The anti-Tryanite spirit, you perceive, was very strong at Miss Townley's, imported probably by day scholars, as well as encouraged by the fact that that clever woman was herself strongly opposed to innovation, and remarked every Sunday that Mr. Crewe had preached an "excellent discourse." Poor Mary Dunn dreaded the moment when school-hours would be over, for then she was sure to be the butt of those very explicit remarks which, in young ladies' as well as young gentlemen's seminaries, constitute the most subtle and delicate form of the innuendo. "I 'd never be a Tryanite, would you?" "Oh, here comes the lady that knows so much more about religion than we do!" "Some people think themselves so very pious!"

It is really surprising that young ladies should not be thought competent to the same curriculum as young gentlemen. I observe that their powers of sarcasm are quite equal; and if there had been a genteel academy for young gentlemen at Milby, I am inclined to think that, notwithstanding Euclid and the classics, the party spirit there would not have exhibited itself in more pungent irony, or more incisive satire, than was heard in Miss Townley's seminary. But there was no such academy, the existence of the grammar-school under Mr. Crewe's superintendence probably discouraging speculations of that kind; and the genteel youths of Milby were chiefly come home for the midsummer holidays from distant schools. Several of us had just assumed coat-tails, and the assumption of new responsibilities apparently following as a matter of course, we were among the candidates for confirmation. I wish I could say that the solemnity of our feelings was on a level with the solemnity of the occasion; but unimaginative boys find it difficult to recognize apostolical institutions in their developed form, and I fear our chief emotion concerning the ceremony was a sense of sheepishness, and our chief opinion, the speculative and heretical position, that it ought to be confined to the girls. It was a pity, you will say; but it is the way with us men in other crises, that come a long while

after confirmation. The golden moments in the stream of life rush past us, and we see nothing but sand; the angels come to visit us, and we only know them when they are gone.

But, as I said, the morning was sunny, the bells were ringing, the ladies of Milby were dressed in their Sunday garments.

And who is this bright-looking woman walking with hasty step along Orchard Street so early, with a large nosegay in her hand? Can it be Janet Dempster, on whom we looked with such deep pity, one sad midnight, hardly a fortnight ago? Yes; no other woman in Milby has those searching black eyes, that tall graceful unconstrained figure, set off by her simple muslin dress and black lace shawl, that massy black hair now so neatly braided in glossy contrast with the white satin ribbons of her modest cap and bonnet. No other woman has that sweet speaking smile, with which she nods to Jonathan Lamb, the old parish clerk. And, ah! — now she comes nearer — there are those sad lines about the mouth and eyes on which that sweet smile plays like sunbeams on the storm-beaten beauty of the full and ripened corn.

She is turning out of Orchard Street, and making her way as fast as she can to her mother's house, a pleasant cottage facing a roadside meadow, from which the hay is being carried. Mrs. Raynor has had her breakfast, and is seated in her arm-chair reading, when Janet opens the door, saying, in her most playful voice —

"Please, mother, I'm come to show myself to you before I go to the Parsonage. Have I put on my pretty cap and bonnet to satisfy you?"

Mrs. Raynor looked over her spectacles, and met her daughter's glance with eyes as dark and loving as her own. She was a much smaller woman than Janet, both in figure and feature, the chief resemblance lying in the eyes and the clear brunette complexion. The mother's hair had long been gray, and was gathered under the neatest of caps, made by her own clever fingers, as all Janet's caps and bonnets were too. They were well-practised fingers, for Mrs. Raynor had supported herself in her widowhood by keeping a millinery establish-

ment, and in this way had earned money enough to give her daughter what was then thought a first-rate education, as well as to save a sum which, eked out by her son-in-law, sufficed to support her in her solitary old age. Always the same clean, neat old lady, dressed in black silk, was Mrs. Raynor: a patient, brave woman, who bowed with resignation under the burden of remembered sorrow, and bore with meek fortitude the new load that the new days brought with them.

"Your bonnet wants pulling a trifle forwarder, my child," she said, smiling, and taking off her spectacles, while Janet at once knelt down before her, and waited to be "set to rights," as she would have done when she was a child. "You 're going straight to Mrs. Crewe's, I suppose? Are those flowers to garnish the dishes?"

"No, indeed, mother. This is a nosegay for the middle of the table. I 've sent up the dinner-service and the ham we had cooked at our house yesterday, and Betty is coming directly with the garnish and the plate. We shall get our good Mrs. Crewe through her troubles famously. Dear tiny woman! You should have seen her lift up her hands yesterday, and pray heaven to take her before ever she should have another collation to get ready for the Bishop. She said, 'It's bad enough to have the Archdeacon, though he does n't want half so many jelly-glasses. I would n't mind, Janet, if it was to feed all the old hungry cripples in Milby; but so much trouble and expense for people who eat too much every day of their lives!' . We had such a cleaning and furbishing-up of the sitting-room yesterday! Nothing will ever do away with the smell of Mr. Crewe's pipes, you know; but we have thrown it into the background, with yellow soap and dry lavender. And now I must run away. You will come to church, mother?"

"Yes, my dear, I would n't lose such a pretty sight. It does my old eyes good to see so many fresh young faces. Is your husband going?"

"Yes, Robert will be there. I 've made him as neat as a new pin this morning, and he says the Bishop will think him too buckish by half. I took him into Mammy Dempster's room to show himself. We hear Tryan is making sure of the Bishop's

support; but we shall see. I would give my crooked guinea, and all the luck it will ever bring me, to have him beaten, for I can't endure the sight of the man coming to harass dear old Mr. and Mrs. Crewe in their last days. Preaching the Gospel indeed! That is the best Gospel that makes everybody happy and comfortable, is n't it, mother?"

"Ah, child, I 'm afraid there 's no Gospel will do that here below."

"Well, I can do something to comfort Mrs. Crewe, at least; so give me a kiss, and good-by till church-time."

The mother leaned back in her chair when Janet was gone, and sank into a painful reverie. When our life is a continuous trial, the moments of respite seem only to substitute the heaviness of dread for the heaviness of actual suffering: the curtain of cloud seems parted an instant only that we may measure all its horror as it hangs low, black, and imminent, in contrast with the transient brightness; the water-drops that visit the parched lips in the desert bear with them only the keen imagination of thirst. Janet looked glad and tender now — but what scene of misery was coming next? She was too like the cistus flowers in the little garden before the window, that, with the shades of evening, might lie with the delicate white and glossy dark of their petals trampled in the roadside dust. When the sun had sunk, and the twilight was deepening, Janet might be sitting there, heated, maddened, sobbing out her griefs with selfish passion, and wildly wishing herself dead.

Mrs. Raynor had been reading about the lost sheep, and the joy there is in heaven over the sinner that repenteth. Surely the eternal love she believed in through all the sadness of her lot, would not leave her child to wander farther and farther into the wilderness till there was no turning — the child so lovely, so pitiful to others, so good — till she was goaded into sin by woman's bitterest sorrows! Mrs. Raynor had her faith and her spiritual comforts, though she was not in the least evangelical, and knew nothing of doctrinal zeal. I fear most of Mr. Tryan's hearers would have considered her destitute of saving knowledge, and I am quite sure she had no well-defined views on justification. Nevertheless, she read her Bible a

great deal, and thought she found divine lessons there — how to bear the cross meekly, and be merciful. Let us hope that there is a saving ignorance, and that Mrs. Raynor was justified without knowing exactly how.

She tried to have hope and trust, though it was hard to believe that the future would be anything else than the harvest of the seed that was being sown before her eyes. But always there is seed being sown silently and unseen, and everywhere there come sweet flowers without our foresight or labor. We reap what we sow, but Nature has love over and above that justice, and gives us shadow and blossom and fruit that spring from no planting of ours.

CHAPTER VI.

Most people must have agreed with Mrs. Raynor that the Confirmation that day was a pretty sight, at least when those slight girlish forms and fair young faces moved in a white rivulet along the aisles, and flowed into kneeling semicircles under the light of the great chancel window, softened by patches of dark old painted glass; and one would think that to look on while a pair of venerable hands pressed such young heads, and a venerable face looked upward for a blessing on them, would be very likely to make the heart swell gently, and to moisten the eyes. Yet I remember the eyes seemed very dry in Milby Church that day, notwithstanding that the Bishop was an old man, and probably venerable (for though he was not an eminent Grecian, he was the brother of a Whig lord); and I think the eyes must have remained dry, because he had small delicate womanish hands adorned with ruffles, and, instead of laying them on the girls' heads, just let them hover over each in quick succession, as if it were not etiquette to touch them, and as if the laying on of hands were like the

theatrical embrace — part of the play, and not to be really believed in. To be sure, there were a great many heads, and the Bishop's time was limited. Moreover, a wig can, under no circumstances, be affecting, except in rare cases of illusion; and copious lawn-sleeves cannot be expected to go directly to any heart except a washerwoman's.

I know, Ned Phipps, who knelt against me, and I am sure made me behave much worse than I should have done without him, whispered that he thought the Bishop was a "guy," and I certainly remember thinking that Mr. Prendergast looked much more dignified with his plain white surplice and black hair. He was a tall commanding man, and read the Liturgy in a strikingly sonorous and uniform voice, which I tried to imitate the next Sunday at home, until my little sister began to cry, and said I was "yoaring at her."

Mr. Tryan sat in a pew near the pulpit with several other clergymen. He looked pale, and rubbed his hand over his face and pushed back his hair oftener than usual. Standing in the aisle close to him, and repeating the responses with edifying loudness, was Mr. Budd, churchwarden and delegate, with a white staff in his hand and a backward bend of his small head and person, such as, I suppose, he considered suitable to a friend of sound religion. Conspicuous in the gallery, too, was the tall figure of Mr. Dempster, whose professional avocations rarely allowed him to occupy his place at church.

"There 's Dempster," said Mrs. Linnet to her daughter Mary, "looking more respectable than usual, I declare. He 's got a fine speech by heart to make to the Bishop, I 'll answer for it. But he 'll be pretty well sprinkled with snuff before service is over, and the Bishop won't be able to listen to him for sneezing, that 's one comfort."

At length the last stage in the long ceremony was over, the large assembly streamed warm and weary into the open afternoon sunshine, and the Bishop retired to the Parsonage, where, after honoring Mrs. Crewe's collation, he was to give audience to the delegates and Mr. Tryan on the great question of the evening lecture.

Between five and six o'clock the Parsonage was once more as quiet as usual under the shadow of its tall elms, and the only traces of the Bishop's recent presence there were the wheel-marks on the gravel, and the long table with its garnished dishes awry, its damask sprinkled with crumbs, and its decanters without their stoppers. Mr. Crewe was already calmly smoking his pipe in the opposite sitting-room, and Janet was agreeing with Mrs. Crewe that some of the blancmange would be a nice thing to take to Sally Martin, while the little old lady herself had a spoon in her hand ready to gather the crumbs into a plate, that she might scatter them on the gravel for the little birds.

Before that time, the Bishop's carriage had been seen driving through the High Street on its way to Lord Trufford's, where he was to dine. The question of the lecture was decided, then?

The nature of the decision may be gathered from the following conversation which took place in the bar of the Red Lion that evening.

"So you 're done, eh, Dempster?" was Mr. Pilgrim's observation, uttered with some gusto. He was not glad Mr. Tryan had gained his point, but he was not sorry Dempster was disappointed.

"Done, sir? Not at all. It is what I anticipated. I knew we had nothing else to expect in these days, when the Church is infested by a set of men who are only fit to give out hymns from an empty cask, to tunes set by a journeyman cobbler. But I was not the less to exert myself in the cause of sound Churchmanship for the good of the town. Any coward can fight a battle when he 's sure of winning; but give me the man who has pluck to fight when he 's sure of losing. That 's my way, sir; and there are many victories worse than a defeat, as Mr. Tryan shall learn to his cost."

"He must be a poor shuperannyated sort of a bishop, that 's my opinion," said Mr. Tomlinson, "to go along with a sneaking Methodist like Tryan. And, for my part, I think we should be as well wi'out bishops, if they 're no wiser than that. Where 's the use o' havin' thousands a-year an' livin' in a pallis, if they don't stick to the Church?"

"No. There you're going out of your depth, Tomlinson," said Mr. Dempster. "No one shall hear me say a word against Episcopacy — it is a safeguard of the Church; we must have ranks and dignities there as well as everywhere else. No, sir! Episcopacy is a good thing; but it may happen that a bishop is not a good thing. Just as brandy is a good thing, though this particular brandy is British, and tastes like sugared rain-water caught down the chimney. Here, Ratcliffe, let me have something to drink, a little less like a decoction of sugar and soot."

"*I* said nothing again' Episcopacy," returned Mr. Tomlinson. "I only said I thought we should do as well wi'out bishops; an' I 'll say it again for the matter o' that. Bishops never brought any grist to my mill."

"Do you know when the lectures are to begin?" said Mr. Pilgrim.

"They are to *begin* on Sunday next," said Mr. Dempster, in a significant tone; "but I think it will not take a long-sighted prophet to foresee the end of them. It strikes me Mr. Tryan will be looking out for another curacy shortly."

"He 'll not get many Milby people to go and hear his lectures after a while, I 'll bet a guinea," observed Mr. Budd. "I know I 'll not keep a single workman on my ground who either goes to the lecture himself or lets anybody belonging to him go."

"Nor me nayther," said Mr. Tomlinson. "No Tryanite shall touch a sack or drive a wagon o' mine, that you may depend on. An' I know more besides me as are o' the same mind."

"Tryan has a good many friends in the town, though, and friends that are likely to stand by him too," said Mr. Pilgrim. "I should say it would be as well to let him and his lectures alone. If he goes on preaching as he does, with such a constitution as his, he 'll get a relaxed throat by-and-by, and you 'll be rid of him without any trouble."

"We 'll not allow him to do himself that injury," said Mr. Dempster. "Since his health is not good, we 'll persuade him to try change of air. Depend upon it, he 'll find the climate of Milby too hot for him."

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Dempster did not stay long at the Red Lion that evening. He was summoned home to meet Mr. Armstrong, a wealthy client, and as he was kept in consultation till a late hour, it happened that this was one of the nights on which Mr. Dempster went to bed tolerably sober. Thus the day, which had been one of Janet's happiest, because it had been spent by her in helping her dear old friend Mrs. Crewe, ended for her with unusual quietude; and as a bright sunset promises a fair morning, so a calm lying down is a good augury for a calm waking. Mr. Dempster, on the Thursday morning, was in one of his best humors, and though perhaps some of the good-humor might result from the prospect of a lucrative and exciting bit of business in Mr. Armstrong's probable lawsuit, the greater part of it was doubtless due to those stirrings of the more kindly, healthy sap of human feeling, by which goodness tries to get the upper hand in us whenever it seems to have the slightest chance — on Sunday mornings, perhaps, when we are set free from the grinding hurry of the week, and take the little three-year-old on our knee at breakfast to share our egg and muffin; in moments of trouble, when death visits our roof or illness makes us dependent on the tending hand of a slighted wife; in quiet talks with an aged mother, of the days when we stood at her knee with our first picture-book, or wrote her loving letters from school. In the man whose childhood has known caresses there is always a fibre of memory that can be touched to gentle issues, and Mr. Dempster, whom you have hitherto seen only as the orator of the Red Lion, and the drunken tyrant of a dreary midnight home, was the first-born darling son of a fair little mother. That mother was living still, and her own large black easy-chair, where she sat knitting through the livelong day, was now set ready for her at the breakfast-table, by

her son's side, a sleek tortoise-shell cat acting as provisional incumbent.

"Good morning, Mamsey! why, you're looking as fresh as a daisy this morning. You're getting young again," said Mr. Dempster, looking up from his newspaper when the little old lady entered. A very little old lady she was, with a pale, scarcely wrinkled face, hair of that peculiar white which tells that the locks have once been blond, a natty pure white cap on her head, and a white shawl pinned over her shoulders. You saw at a glance that she had been a mignonne blonde, strangely unlike her tall, ugly, dingy-complexioned son; unlike her daughter-in-law, too, whose large-featured brunette beauty seemed always thrown into higher relief by the white presence of little Mamsey. The unlikeness between Janet and her mother-in-law went deeper than outline and complexion, and indeed there was little sympathy between them, for old Mrs. Dempster had not yet learned to believe that her son, Robert, would have gone wrong if he had married the right woman — a meek woman like herself, who would have borne him children, and been a deft, orderly housekeeper. In spite of Janet's tenderness and attention to her, she had had little love for her daughter-in-law from the first, and had witnessed the sad growth of home-misery through long years, always with a disposition to lay the blame on the wife rather than on the husband, and to reproach Mrs. Raynor for encouraging her daughter's faults by a too exclusive sympathy. But old Mrs. Dempster had that rare gift of silence and passivity which often supplies the absence of mental strength; and, whatever were her thoughts, she said no word to aggravate the domestic discord. Patient and mute she sat at her knitting through many a scene of quarrel and anguish; resolutely she appeared unconscious of the sounds that reached her ears, and the facts she divined after she had retired to her bed; mutely she witnessed poor Janet's faults, only registering them as a balance of excuse on the side of her son. The hard, astute, domineering attorney was still that little old woman's pet, as he had been when she watched with triumphant pride his first tumbling effort to march alone across the nursery floor.

"See what a good son he is to me!" she often thought. "Never gave me a harsh word. And so he might have been a good husband."

Oh, it is piteous — that sorrow of aged women! In early youth, perhaps, they said to themselves, "I shall be happy when I have a husband to love me best of all;" then, when the husband was too careless, "My child will comfort me;" then, through the mother's watching and toil, "My child will repay me all when it grows up." And at last, after the long journey of years has been wearily travelled through, the mother's heart is weighed down by a heavier burthen, and no hope remains but the grave.

But this morning old Mrs. Dempster sat down in her easy-chair without any painful, suppressed remembrance of the preceding night.

"I declare mammy looks younger than Mrs. Crewe, who is only sixty-five," said Janet. "Mrs. Crewe will come to see you to-day, mammy, and tell you all about her troubles with the Bishop and the collation. She 'll bring her knitting, and you 'll have a regular gossip together."

"The gossip will be all on one side, then, for Mrs. Crewe gets so very deaf, I can't make her hear a word. And if I motion to her, she always understands me wrong."

"Oh, she will have so much to tell you to-day, you will not want to speak yourself. You who have patience to knit those wonderful counterpanes, mammy, must not be impatient with dear Mrs. Crewe. Good old lady! I can't bear her to think she 's ever tiresome to people, and you know she 's very ready to fancy herself in the way. I think she would like to shrink up to the size of a mouse, that she might run about and do people good without their noticing her."

"It is n't patience I want, God knows; it 's lungs to speak loud enough. But you 'll be at home yourself, I suppose, this morning; and you can talk to her for me."

"No, mammy; I promised poor Mrs. Lowme to go and sit with her. She 's confined to her room, and both the Miss Lowmes are out; so I 'm going to read the newspaper to her and amuse her."

"Could n't you go another morning? As Mr. Armstrong and that other gentleman are coming to dinner, I should think it would be better to stay at home. Can you trust Betty to see to everything? She 's new to the place."

"Oh, I could n't disappoint Mrs. Lowme; I promised her. Betty will do very well, no fear."

Old Mrs. Dempster was silent after this, and began to sip her tea. The breakfast went on without further conversation for some time, Mr. Dempster being absorbed in the papers. At length, when he was running over the advertisements, his eye seemed to be caught by something that suggested a new thought to him. He presently thumped the table with an air of exultation, and said, turning to Janet —

"I 've a capital idea, Gypsy!" (that was his name for his dark eyed wife when he was in an extraordinarily good humor), "and you shall help me. It 's just what you 're up to."

"What is it?" said Janet, her face beaming at the sound of the pet name, now heard so seldom. "Anything to do with conveyancing?"

"It 's a bit of fun worth a dozen fees — a plan for raising a laugh against Tryan and his gang of hypocrites."

"What is it? Nothing that wants a needle and thread, I hope, else I must go and tease mother."

"No, nothing sharper than your wit — except mine. I 'll tell you what it is. We 'll get up a programme of the Sunday evening lecture, like a play-bill, you know — 'Grand Performance of the celebrated Mountebank,' and so on. We 'll bring in the Tryanites — old Landor and the rest — in appropriate characters. Proctor shall print it, and we 'll circulate it in the town. It will be a capital hit."

"Bravo!" said Janet, clapping her hands. She would just then have pretended to like almost anything, in her pleasure at being appealed to by her husband, and she really did like to laugh at the Tryanites. "We 'll set about it directly, and sketch it out before you go to the office. I 've got Tryan's sermons up-stairs, but I don't think there 's anything in them we can use. I 've only just looked into them; they 're not at

all what I expected — dull, stupid things — nothing of the roaring fire-and-brimstone sort that I expected."

"Roaring? No; Tryan's as soft as a sucking dove — one of your honey-mouthed hypocrites. Plenty of devil and malice in him, though, I could see that, while he was talking to the Bishop; but as smooth as a snake outside. He's beginning a single-handed fight with me, I can see — persuading my clients away from me. We shall see who will be the first to cry *peccavi*. Milby will do better without Mr. Tryan than without Robert Dempster, I fancy! and Milby shall never be flooded with cant as long as I can raise a breakwater against it. But now, get the breakfast things cleared away, and let us set about the play-bill. Come, Mamsey, come and have a walk with me round the garden, and let us see how the cucumbers are getting on. I've never taken you round the garden for an age. Come, you don't want a bonnet. It's like walking in a greenhouse this morning."

"But she will want a parasol," said Janet. "There's one on the stand against the garden-door, Robert."

The little old lady took her son's arm with placid pleasure. She could barely reach it so as to rest upon it, but he inclined a little towards her, and accommodated his heavy long-limbed steps to her feeble pace. The cat chose to sun herself too, and walked close beside them, with tail erect, rubbing her sleek sides against their legs, — too well fed to be excited by the twittering birds. The garden was of the grassy, shady kind, often seen attached to old houses in provincial towns; the apple-trees had had time to spread their branches very wide, the shrubs and hardy perennial plants had grown into a luxuriance that required constant trimming to prevent them from intruding on the space for walking. But the farther end, which united with green fields, was open and sunny.

It was rather sad, and yet pretty, to see that little group passing out of the shadow into the sunshine, and out of the sunshine into the shadow again: sad, because this tenderness of the son for the mother was hardly more than a nucleus of healthy life in an organ hardening by disease, because the man who was linked in this way with an innocent past, had become

callous in worldliness, fevered by sensuality, enslaved by chance impulses; pretty, because it showed how hard it is to kill the deep-down fibrous roots of human love and goodness — how the man from whom we make it our pride to shrink, has yet a close brotherhood with us through some of our most sacred feelings.

As they were returning to the house, Janet met them, and said, "Now, Robert, the writing things are ready. I shall be clerk, and Mat Paine can copy it out after."

Mammy once more deposited in her arm-chair, with her knitting in her hand, and the cat purring at her elbow, Janet seated herself at the table, while Mr. Dempster placed himself near her, took out his snuff-box, and plentifully suffusing himself with the inspiring powder, began to dictate.

What he dictated, we shall see by-and-by.

CHAPTER VIII.

The next day, Friday, at five o'clock by the sun-dial, the large bow-window of Mrs. Jerome's parlor was open; and that lady herself was seated within its ample semicircle, having a table before her on which her best tea-tray, her best china, and her best urn-rug had already been standing in readiness for half an hour. Mrs. Jerome's best tea-service was of delicate white fluted china, with gold sprigs upon it — as pretty a tea-service as you need wish to see, and quite good enough for chimney ornaments; indeed, as the cups were without handles, most visitors who had the distinction of taking tea out of them, wished that such charming china had already been promoted to that honorary position. Mrs. Jerome was like her china, handsome and old-fashioned. She was a buxom lady of sixty, in an elaborate lace cap fastened by a frill under her chin, a dark, well-curled front concealing her fore-

head, a snowy neckerchief exhibiting its ample folds as far as her waist, and a stiff gray silk gown. She had a clean damask napkin pinned before her to guard her dress during the process of tea-making; her favorite geraniums in the bow-window were looking as healthy as she could desire; her own handsome portrait, painted when she was twenty years younger, was smiling down on her with agreeable flattery; and altogether she seemed to be in as peaceful and pleasant a position as a buxom, well-drest elderly lady need desire. But, as in so many other cases, appearances were deceptive. Her mind was greatly perturbed and her temper ruffled by the fact that it was more than a quarter past five even by the losing timepiece, that it was half-past by her large gold watch, which she held in her hand as if she were counting the pulse of the afternoon, and that, by the kitchen clock, which she felt sure was not an hour too fast, it had already struck six. The lapse of time was rendered the more unendurable to Mrs. Jerome by her wonder that Mr. Jerome could stay out in the garden with Lizzie in that thoughtless way, taking it so easily that tea-time was long past, and that, after all the trouble of getting down the best tea-things, Mr. Tryan would not come.

This honor had been shown to Mr. Tryan, not at all because Mrs. Jerome had any highappreciation of his doctrine or of his exemplary activity as a pastor, but simply because he was a "Church clergyman," and as such was regarded by her with the same sort of exceptional respect that a white woman who had married a native of the Society Islands might be supposed to feel towards a white-skinned visitor from the land of her youth. For Mrs. Jerome had been reared a Churchwoman, and having attained the age of thirty before she was married, had felt the greatest repugnance in the first instance to renouncing the religious forms in which she had been brought up. "You know," she said in confidence to her Church acquaintances, "I would n't give no ear at all to Mr. Jerome at fust; but after all, I begun to think as there was a many things worse nor goin' to chapel, an' you 'd better do that nor not pay your way. Mr. Jerome had a very pleasant manner with him, an' there was niver another as kept a gig, an' 'ud make a

settlement on me like him, chapel or no chapel. It seemed very odd to me for a long while, the preachin' without book, an' the stannin' up to one long prayer, istid o' changin' your postur. But la! there's nothin' as you may n't get used to i' time; you can al'ys sit down, you know, before the prayer 's done. The ministers say pretty nigh the same things as the Church parsons, by what I could iver make out, an' we 're out o' chapel i' the mornin' a deal sooner nor they 're out o' church. An' as for pews, ours is a deal comfortabler nor any i' Milby Church."

Mrs. Jerome, you perceive, had not a keen susceptibility to shades of doctrine, and it is probable that, after listening to Dissenting eloquence for thirty years, she might safely have re-entered the Establishment without performing any spiritual quarantine. Her mind, apparently, was of that non-porous flinty character which is not in the least danger from surrounding damp. But on the question of getting start of the sun on the day's business, and clearing her conscience of the necessary sum of meals and the consequent "washing up" as soon as possible, so that the family might be well in bed at nine, Mrs. Jerome *was* susceptible; and the present lingering pace of things, united with Mr. Jerome's unaccountable obliviousness, was not to be borne any longer. So she rang the bell for Sally.

"Goodness me, Sally! go into the garden an' see after your master. Tell him it 's goin' on for six, an' Mr. Tryan 'ull niver think o' comin' now, an' it 's time we got tea over. An' he 's lettin' Lizzie stain her frock, I expect, among them strawberry-beds. Make her come in this minute."

No wonder Mr. Jerome was tempted to linger in the garden, for though the house was pretty and well deserved its name — "the White House," the tall damask roses that clustered over the porch being thrown into relief by rough stucco of the most brilliant white, yet the garden and orchards were Mr. Jerome's glory, as well they might be; and there was nothing in which he had a more innocent pride — peace to a good man's memory! all his pride was innocent — than in conducting a hitherto uninitiated visitor o[illegible] his grounds, and making

him in some degree aware of the incomparable advantages possessed by the inhabitants of the White House in the matter of red-streaked apples, russets, northern greens (excellent for baking), swan-egg pears, and early vegetables, to say nothing of flowering "srubs," pink hawthorns, lavender bushes more than ever Mrs. Jerome could use, and, in short, a superabundance of everything that a person retired from business could desire to possess himself or to share with his friends. The garden was one of those old-fashioned paradises which hardly exist any longer except as memories of our childhood: no finical separation between flower and kitchen garden there; no monotony of enjoyment for one sense to the exclusion of another; but a charming paradisiacal mingling of all that was pleasant to the eyes and good for food. The rich flower-border running along every walk, with its endless succession of spring flowers, anemones, auriculas, wall-flowers, sweet-williams, campanulas, snapdragons, and tiger-lilies, had its taller beauties, such as moss and Provence roses, varied with espalier apple-trees; the crimson of a carnation was carried out in the lurking crimson of the neighboring strawberry-beds; you gathered a moss-rose one moment and a bunch of currants the next; you were in a delicious fluctuation between the scent of jasmine and the juice of gooseberries. Then what a high wall at one end, flanked by a summer-house so lofty, that after ascending its long flight of steps you could see perfectly well there was no view worth looking at; what alcoves and garden-seats in all directions; and along one side, what a hedge, tall, and firm, and unbroken, like a green wall!

It was near this hedge that Mr. Jerome was standing when Sally found him. He had set down the basket of strawberries on the gravel, and had lifted up little Lizzie in his arms to look at a bird's nest. Lizzie peeped, and then looked at her grandpa with round blue eyes, and then peeped again.

"D'ye see it, Lizzie?" he whispered.

"Yes," she whispered in return, putting her lips very near grandpa's face. At this moment Sally appeared.

"Eh, eh, Sally, what's the matter? Is Mr. Tryan come?"

"No, sir, an' Missis says she 's sure he won't come now, an'

she wants you to come in an' hev tea. Dear heart, Miss Lizzie, you 've stained your pinafore, an' I should n't wonder if it 's gone through to your frock. There 'll be fine work! Come alonk wi' me, do."

"Nay, nay, nay, we 've done no harm, we 've done no harm, hev we, Lizzie? The wash-tub 'ull make all right again."

Sally, regarding the wash-tub from a different point of view, looked sourly serious, and hurried away with Lizzie, who trotted submissively along, her little head in eclipse under a large nankin bonnet, while Mr. Jerome followed leisurely with his full broad shoulders in rather a stooping posture, and his large good-natured features and white locks shaded by a broad-brimmed hat.

"Mr. Jerome, I wonder at you," said Mrs. Jerome, in a tone of indignant remonstrance, evidently sustained by a deep sense of injury, as her husband opened the parlor door. "When will you leave off invitin' people to meals an' not lettin' 'em know the time? I 'll answer for 't, you niver said a word to Mr. Tryan as we should take tea at five o'clock. It 's just like you!"

"Nay, nay, Susan," answered the husband, in a soothing tone, "there 's nothin' amiss. I told Mr. Tryan as we took tea at five punctial; mayhap summat 's a-detainin' on him. He 's a deal to do, an' to think on, remember."

"Why, it 's struck six i' the kitchen a'ready. It 's nonsense to look for him comin' now. So you may 's well ring for th' urn. Now Sally 's got th' heater in the fire, we may 's well hev th' urn in, though he does n't come. I niver see 'd the like o' you, Mr. Jerome, for axin' people an' givin' me the trouble o' gettin' things down an' hevin' crumpets made, an' after all they don't come. I shall hev to wash every one o' these tea-things myself, for there 's no trustin' Sally — she 'd break a fortin i' crockery i' no time!"

"But why will you give yourself sich trouble, Susan? Our every-day tea-things would ha' done as well for Mr. Tryan, an' they 're a deal convenenter to hold."

"Yes, that 's just your way, Mr. Jerome, you 're al'ys a-findin' faut wi' my chany, because I bought it myself afore

I was married. But let me tell you, I knowed how to choose chany if I did n't know how to choose a husband. An' where 's Lizzie? You 've niver left her i' the garden by herself, with her white frock on an' clean stockins?"

"Be easy, my dear Susan, be easy; Lizzie 's come in wi' Sally. She 's hevin' her pinafore took off, I 'll be bound. Ah! there 's Mr. Tryan a-comin' through the gate."

Mrs. Jerome began hastily to adjust her damask napkin and the expression of her countenance for the reception of the clergyman, and Mr. Jerome went out to meet his guest, whom he greeted outside the door.

"Mr. Tryan, how do you do, Mr. Tryan? Welcome to the White House! I 'm glad to see you, sir — I 'm glad to see you."

If you had heard the tone of mingled good-will, veneration, and condolence in which this greeting was uttered, even without seeing the face that completely harmonized with it, you would have no difficulty in inferring the ground-notes of Mr. Jerome's character. To a fine ear that tone said as plainly as possible — "Whatever recommends itself to me, Thomas Jerome, as piety and goodness, shall have my love and honor. Ah, friends, this pleasant world is a sad one, too, is n't it? Let us help one another, let us help one another." And it was entirely owing to this basis of character, not at all from any clear and precise doctrinal discrimination, that Mr. Jerome had very early in life become a Dissenter. In his boyish days he had been thrown where Dissent seemed to have the balance of piety, purity, and good works on its side, and to become a Dissenter seemed to him identical with choosing God instead of mammon. That race of Dissenters is extinct in these days, when opinion has got far ahead of feeling, and every chapel-going youth can fill our ears with the advantages of the Voluntary system, the corruptions of a State Church, and the Scriptural evidence that the first Christians were Congregationalists. Mr. Jerome knew nothing of this theoretic basis for Dissent, and in the utmost extent of his polemical discussion he had not gone further than to question whether a Christian man was bound in conscience to distinguish Christ

mas and Easter by any peculiar observance beyond the eating of mince-pies and cheese-cakes. It seemed to him that all seasons were alike good for thanking God, departing from evil and doing well, whereas it might be desirable to restrict the period for indulging in unwholesome forms of pastry. Mr. Jerome's dissent being of this simple, non-polemical kind, it is easy to understand that the report he heard of Mr. Tryan as a good man and a powerful preacher, who was stirring the hearts of the people, had been enough to attract him to the Paddiford Church, and that having felt himself more edified there than he had of late been under Mr. Stickney's discourses at Salem, he had driven thither repeatedly in the Sunday afternoons, and had sought an opportunity of making Mr. Tryan's acquaintance. The evening lecture was a subject of warm interest with him, and the opposition Mr. Tryan met with gave that interest a strong tinge of partisanship; for there was a store of irascibility in Mr. Jerome's nature which must find a vent somewhere, and in so kindly and upright a man could only find it in indignation against those whom he held to be enemies of truth and goodness. Mr. Tryan had not hitherto been to the White House, but yesterday, meeting Mr. Jerome in the street, he had at once accepted the invitation to tea, saying there was something he wished to talk about. He appeared worn and fatigued now, and after shaking hands with Mrs. Jerome, threw himself into a chair and looked out on the pretty garden with an air of relief.

"What a nice place you have here, Mr. Jerome! I've not seen anything so quiet and pretty since I came to Milby. On Paddiford Common, where I live, you know, the bushes are all sprinkled with soot, and there 's never any quiet except in the dead of night."

"Dear heart! dear heart! That 's very bad — and for you, too, as hev to study. Would n't it be better for you to be somewhere more out i' the country like?"

"Oh no! I should lose so much time in going to and fro; and besides, I like to be *among* the people. I've no face to go and preach resignation to those poor things in their smoky air and comfortless homes, when I come straight from every

luxury myself. There are many things quite lawful for other men, which a clergyman must forego if he would do any good in a manufacturing population like this."

Here the preparations for tea were crowned by the simultaneous appearance of Lizzie and the crumpet. It is a pretty surprise, when one visits an elderly couple, to see a little figure enter in a white frock with a blond head as smooth as satin, round blue eyes, and a cheek like an apple-blossom. A toddling little girl is a centre of common feeling which makes the most dissimilar people understand each other; and Mr. Tryan looked at Lizzie with that quiet pleasure which is always genuine.

"Here we are, here we are!" said proud grandpapa. "You did n't think we 'd got such a little gell as this, did you, Mr. Tryan? Why, it seems but th' other day since her mother was just such another. This is our little Lizzie. this is. Come an' shake hands wi' Mr. Tryan, Lizzie; come."

Lizzie advanced without hesitation, and put out one hand, while she fingered her coral necklace with the other, and looked up into Mr. Tryan's face with a reconnoitring gaze. He stroked the satin head, and said in his gentlest voice, "How do you do, Lizzie? will you give me a kiss?" She put up her little bud of a mouth, and then retreating a little and glancing down at her frock, said —

"Dit id my noo fock. I put it on 'tod you wad toming. Tally taid you would n't 'ook at it."

"Hush, hush, Lizzie! little gells must be seen and not neard," said Mrs. Jerome; while grandpapa, winking significantly, and looking radiant with delight at Lizzie's extraordinary promise of cleverness, set her up on her high cane-chair by the side of grandma, who lost no time in shielding the beauties of the new frock with a napkin.

"Well now, Mr. Tryan," said Mr. Jerome, in a very serious tone when tea had been distributed, "let me hear how you 're a-goin' on about the lectur. When I was i' the town yisterday, I heared as there was pessecutin' schemes a-bein' laid again' you. I fear me those raskills 'll mek things very onpleasant to you."

"I've no doubt they will attempt it; indeed, I quite expect there will be a regular mob got up on Sunday evening, as there was when the delegates returned, on purpose to annoy me and the congregation on our way to church."

"Ah, they 're capible o' anything, such men as Dempster an' Budd; an' Tomlinson backs 'em wi' money, though he can't wi' brains. Howiver, Dempster 's lost one client by his wicked doins, an' I 'm deceived if he won't lose more nor one. I little thought, Mr. Tryan, when I put my affairs into his hands twenty 'ear ago this Michaelmas, as he was to turn out a pessecutor o' religion. I niver lighted on a cliverer, promisiner young man nor he was then. They talked of his bein' fond of a extry glass now an' then, but niver nothin' like what he 's come to since. An' it 's head-piece you must look for in a lawyer, Mr. Tryan, it 's head-piece. His wife, too, was al'ys an uncommon favorite o' mine — poor thing! I hear sad stories about her now. But she 's druv to it, she 's druv to it, Mr. Tryan. A tender-hearted woman to the poor, she is, as iver lived; an' as pretty-spoken a woman as you need wish to talk to. Yes! I 'd al'ys a likin' for Dempster an' his wife, spite o' iverything. But as soon as iver I heared o' that dilegate business, I says, says I, that man shall hev no more to do wi' my affairs. It may put me t' inconvenience, but I 'll encourage no man as pessecutes religion."

"He is evidently the brain and hand of the persecution," said Mr. Tryan. "There may be a strong feeling against me in a large number of the inhabitants — it must be so from the great ignorance of spiritual things in this place. But I fancy there would have been no formal opposition to the lecture, if Dempster had not planned it. I am not myself the least alarmed at anything he can do; he will find I am not to be cowed or driven away by insult or personal danger. God has sent me to this place, and, by His blessing, I 'll not shrink from anything I may have to encounter in doing His work among the people. But I feel it right to call on all those who know the value of the Gospel, to stand by me publicly. I think — and Mr. Landor agrees with me — that it will be well for my friends to proceed with me in a body to the church on

Sunday evening. Dempster, you know, has pretended that almost all the respectable inhabitants are opposed to the lecture. Now, I wish that falsehood to be visibly contradicted. What do you think of the plan? I have to-day been to see several of my friends, who will make a point of being there to accompany me, and will communicate with others on the subject."

"I 'll make one, Mr. Tryan, I 'll make one. You shall not be wantin' in any support as I can give. Before you come to it, sir, Milby was a dead an' dark place; you are the fust man i' the Church to my knowledge as has brought the word o' God home to the people; an' I 'll stan' by you, sir, I 'll stan' by you. I 'm a Dissenter, Mr. Tryan; I 've been a Dissenter ever sin' I was fifteen 'ear old; but show me good i' the Church, an' I 'm a Churchman too. When I was a boy I lived at Tilston; you may n't know the place; the best part o' the land there belonged to Squire Sandeman; he 'd a club-foot, had Squire Sandeman — lost a deal o' money by canal shares. Well, sir, as I was sayin', I lived at Tilston, an' the rector there was a terrible drinkin', fox-huntin' man; you niver see'd such a parish i' your time for wickedness; Milby 's nothin' to it. Well, sir, my father was a workin' man, an' could n't afford to gi' me ony eddication, so I went to a night-school as was kep by a Dissenter, one Jacob Wright; an' it was from that man, sir, as I got my little schoolin' an' my knowledge o' religion. I went to chapel wi' Jacob — he was a good man was Jacob — an' to chapel I 've been iver since. But I 'm no enemy o' the Church, sir, when the Church brings light to the ignorant and the sinful; an' that 's what you 're a-doin', Mr. Tryan. Yes, sir, I 'll stan' by you. I 'll go to church wi' you o' Sunday evenin'."

"You 'd far better stay at home, Mr. Jerome, if I may give *my* opinion," interposed Mrs. Jerome. "It 's not as I hev n't ivery respect for you, Mr. Tryan, but Mr. Jerome 'ull do you no good by his interferin'. Dissenters are not at all looked on i' Milby, an' he 's as nervous as iver he can be; he 'll come back as ill as ill, an' niver let me hev a wink o' sleep all night."

Mrs. Jerome had been frightened at the mention of a mob, and her retrospective regard for the religious communion of her youth by no means inspired her with the temper of a martyr. Her husband looked at her with an expression of tender and grieved remonstrance, which might have been that of the patient patriarch on the memorable occasion when he rebuked *his* wife.

"Susan, Susan, let me beg on you not to oppose me, and put stumblin'-blocks i' the way o' doin' what 's right. I can't give up my conscience, let me give up what else I may."

"Perhaps," said Mr. Tryan, feeling slightly uncomfortable, "since you are not very strong, my dear sir, it will be well, as Mrs. Jerome suggests, that you should not run the risk of any excitement."

"Say no more, Mr. Tryan. I 'll stan' by you, sir. It 's my duty. It 's the cause o' God, sir ; it 's the cause o' God."

Mr. Tryan obeyed his impulse of admiration and gratitude, and put out his hand to the white-haired old man, saying, "Thank you, Mr. Jerome, thank you."

Mr. Jerome grasped the proffered hand in silence, and then threw himself back in his chair, casting a regretful look at his wife, which seemed to say, "Why don't you feel with me, Susan ?"

The sympathy of this simple-minded old man was more precious to Mr. Tryan than any mere onlooker could have imagined. To persons possessing a great deal of that facile psychology which prejudges individuals by means of formulæ, and casts them, without further trouble, into duly lettered pigeonholes, the Evangelical curate might seem to be doing simply what all other men like to do — carrying out objects which were identified not only with his theory, which is but a kind of secondary egoism, but also with the primary egoism of his feelings. Opposition may become sweet to a man when he has christened it persecution : a self-obtrusive, over-hasty reformer complacently disclaiming all merit, while his friends call him a martyr, has not in reality a career the most arduous to the fleshly mind. But Mr. Tryan was not cast in the mould of the gratuitous martyr. With a power of persistence which

had been often blamed as obstinacy, he had an acute sensibility to the very hatred or ridicule he did not flinch from provoking. Every form of disapproval jarred him painfully; and, though he fronted his opponents manfully, and often with considerable warmth of temper, he had no pugnacious pleasure in the contest. It was one of the weaknesses of his nature to be too keenly alive to every harsh wind of opinion; to wince under the frowns of the foolish; to be irritated by the injustice of those who could not possibly have the elements indispensable for judging him rightly; and with all this acute sensibility to blame, this dependence on sympathy, he had for years been constrained into a position of antagonism. No wonder, then, that good old Mr. Jerome's cordial words were balm to him. He had often been thankful to an old woman for saying "God bless you;" to a little child for smiling at him; to a dog for submitting to be patted by him.

Tea being over by this time, Mr. Tryan proposed a walk in the garden as a means of dissipating all recollection of the recent conjugal dissidence. Little Lizzie's appeal, "Me go, gandpa!" could not be rejected, so she was duly bonneted and pinafored, and then they turned out into the evening sunshine. Not Mrs. Jerome, however; she had a deeply meditated plan of retiring *ad interim* to the kitchen and washing up the best tea-things, as a mode of getting forward with the sadly retarded business of the day.

"This way, Mr. Tryan, this way," said the old gentleman; "I must take you to my pastur fust, an' show you our cow — the best milker i' the county. An' see here at these back-buildins, how convenent the dairy is; I planned it ivery bit myself. An' here I 've got my little carpenter's shop an' my blacksmith's shop; I do no end o' jobs here myself. I niver could bear to be idle, Mr. Tryan; I must al'ys be at somethin' or other. It was time for me to lay by business an' mek room for younger folks. I 'd got money enough, wi' only one daughter to leave it to, an' I says to myself, says I, it 's time to leave off moitherin' myself wi' this world so much, an' give more time to thinkin' of another. But there 's a many hours atween getting up an' lyin' down, an' thoughts are no cumber;

you can move about wi' a good many on 'em in your head. See, here 's the pastur."

A very pretty pasture it was, where the large-spotted short-horned cow quietly chewed the cud as she lay and looked sleepily at her admirers — a daintily trimmed hedge all round, dotted here and there with a mountain-ash or a cherry-tree.

"I 've a good bit more land besides this, worth your while to look at, but mayhap it 's further nor you 'd like to walk now. Bless you! I 've welly an acre o' potato-ground yonders; I 've a good big family to supply, you know." (Here Mr. Jerome winked and smiled significantly.) "An' that puts me i' mind, Mr. Tryan, o' summat I wanted to say to you. Clergymen like you, I know, see a deal more poverty an' that, than other folks, an' hev a many claims on 'em more nor they can well meet; an' if you 'll mek use o' my purse any time, or let me know where I can be o' any help, I 'll tek it very kind on you."

"Thank you, Mr. Jerome, I will do so, I promise you. I saw a sad case yesterday; a collier — a fine broad-chested fellow about thirty — was killed by the falling of a wall in the Paddiford colliery. I was in one of the cottages near, when they brought him home on a door, and the shriek of the wife has been ringing in my ears ever since. There are three little children. Happily the woman has her loom, so she will be able to keep out of the workhouse; but she looks very delicate."

"Give me her name, Mr. Tryan," said Mr. Jerome, drawing out his pocket-book. "I 'll call an' see her."

Deep was the fountain of pity in the good old man's heart! He often ate his dinner stintingly, oppressed by the thought that there were men, women, and children, with no dinner to sit down to, and would relieve his mind by going out in the afternoon to look for some need that he could supply, some honest struggle in which he could lend a helping hand. That any living being should want, was his chief sorrow; that any rational being should waste, was the next. Sally, indeed, having been scolded by master for a too lavish use of sticks in lighting the kitchen fire, and various instances of recklessness

with regard to candle-ends, considered him "as mean as aenything;" but he had as kindly a warmth as the morning sunlight, and, like the sunlight, his goodness shone on all that came in his way, from the saucy rosy-cheeked lad whom he delighted to make happy with a Christmas box, to the pallid sufferers up dim entries, languishing under the tardy death of want and misery.

It was very pleasant to Mr. Tryan to listen to the simple chat of the old man — to walk in the shade of the incomparable orchard, and hear the story of the crops yielded by the red-streaked apple-tree, and the quite embarrassing plentifulness of the summer-pears — to drink in the sweet evening breath of the garden, as they sat in the alcove — and so, for a short interval, to feel the strain of his pastoral task relaxed.

Perhaps he felt the return to that task through the dusty roads all the more painfully, perhaps something in that quiet shady home had reminded him of the time before he had taken on him the yoke of self-denial. The strongest heart will faint sometimes under the feeling that enemies are bitter, and that friends only know half its sorrows. The most resolute soul will now and then cast back a yearning look in treading the rough mountain-path, away from the greensward and laughing voices of the valley. However it was, in the nine o'clock twilight that evening, when Mr. Tryan had entered his small study and turned the key in the door, he threw himself into the chair before his writing-table, and, heedless of the papers there, leaned his face low on his hand, and moaned heavily.

It is apt to be so in this life, I think. While we are coldly discussing a man's career, sneering at his mistakes, blaming his rashness, and labelling his opinions — "Evangelical and narrow," or "Latitudinarian and Pantheistic," or "Anglican and supercilious" — that man, in his solitude, is perhaps shedding hot tears because his sacrifice is a hard one, because strength and patience are failing him to speak the difficult word, and do the difficult deed.

CHAPTER IX.

Mr. Tryan showed no such symptoms of weakness on the critical Sunday. He unhesitatingly rejected the suggestion that he should be taken to church in Mr. Landor's carriage — a proposition which that gentleman made as an amendment on the original plan, when the rumors of meditated insult became alarming. Mr. Tryan declared he would have no precautions taken, but would simply trust in God and his good cause. Some of his more timid friends thought this conduct rather defiant than wise, and reflecting that a mob has great talents for impromptu, and that legal redress is imperfect satisfaction for having one's head broken with a brickbat, were beginning to question their consciences very closely as to whether it was not a duty they owed to their families to stay at home on Sunday evening. These timorous persons, however, were in a small minority, and the generality of Mr. Tryan's friends and hearers rather exulted in an opportunity of braving insult for the sake of a preacher to whom they were attached on personal as well as doctrinal grounds. Miss Pratt spoke of Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, and observed that the present crisis afforded an occasion for emulating their heroism even in these degenerate times; while less highly instructed persons, whose memories were not well stored with precedents, simply expressed their determination, as Mr. Jerome had done, to "stan' by" the preacher and his cause, believing it to be the "cause of God."

On Sunday evening, then, at a quarter past six, Mr. Tryan, setting out from Mr. Landor's with a party of his friends who had assembled there, was soon joined by two other groups from Mr. Pratt's and Mr. Dunn's; and stray persons on their way to church naturally falling into rank behind this leading file, by the time they reached the entrance of Orchard Street, Mr. Tryan's friends formed a considerable procession, walking

three or four abreast. It was in Orchard Street, and towards the church gates, that the chief crowd was collected; and at Mr. Dempster's drawing-room window, on the upper floor, a more select assembly of Anti-Tryanites were gathered to witness the entertaining spectacle of the Tryanites walking to church amidst the jeers and hootings of the crowd.

To prompt the popular wit with appropriate sobriquets, numerous copies of Mr. Dempster's play-bill were posted on the walls, in suitably large and emphatic type. As it is possible that the most industrious collector of mural literature may not have been fortunate enough to possess himself of this production, which ought by all means to be preserved amongst the materials of our provincial religious history, I subjoin a faithful copy.

GRAND ENTERTAINMENT!!!

To be given at Milby on Sunday evening next, by the
FAMOUS COMEDIAN, TRY-IT-ON!
And his first-rate Company, including not only an
UNPARALLELED CAST FOR COMEDY!
But a Large Collection of *reclaimed and converted Animals*;

Among the rest
A Bear, who used to *dance!*
A Parrot, once given to *swearing!!*
A Polygamous Pig!!!
and
A Monkey who used to *catch fleas on a Sunday!!!!*
Together with a
Pair of *regenerated* LINNETS!
With an entirely new song, and *plumage.*

MR. TRY-IT-ON

Will first pass through the streets, in procession, with his unrivalled Company, warranted to have their *eyes turned up higher*, and the *corners of their mouths turned down lower*, than any other company of Mountebanks in this circuit!

AFTER WHICH
The Theatre will be opened, and the entertainment will
commence at HALF-PAST SIX,
When will be presented

A piece, never before performed on any stage, entitled,

THE WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING;

or

THE METHODIST IN A MASK.

Mr. Boanerges Soft Sawder, ...	Mr. TRY-IT-ON.
Old Ten-per-cent Godly, ...	Mr. GANDER.
Dr. Feedemup, ...	Mr. TONIC.
Mr. Lime-Twig Lady-winner, ...	Mr. TRY-IT-ON.
Miss Piety Bait-the-hook, ...	Miss TONIC.
Angelica, ...	Miss SERAPHINA TONIC

After which
A miscellaneous Musical Interlude, commencing with
The *Lamentations of Jerom-iah!*
In nasal recitative.

To be followed by
The favorite Cackling Quartette,
by
Two Hen-birds who are *no chickens!*
The well-known *counter*-tenor, Mr. Done, and a *Gander,*
lineally descended from the *Goose* that laid golden eggs!

To conclude with a
GRAND CHORUS by the
Entire Orchestra of Converted Animals!!

But owing to the unavoidable absence (from illness) of the *Bulldog, who has left off fighting,* Mr. Tonic has kindly undertaken, at a moment's notice, to supply the "*bark!*"

The whole to conclude with a
Screaming Farce of
THE PULPIT SNATCHER.

Mr. Saintly Smooth-Face, ...	Mr. TRY-IT-ON!
Mr. Worming Sneaker, ...	Mr. TRY-IT-ON!!
Mr. All-grace No-works, ...	Mr. TRY-IT-ON!!!
Mr. Elect-and-Chosen Apewell, ...	Mr. TRY-IT-ON!!!!
Mr. Malevolent Prayerful, ...	Mr. TRY-IT-ON!!!!!
Mr. Foist-himself-everywhere, ...	Mr. TRY-IT-ON!!!!!!
Mr. Flout-the-aged Upstart, ...	Mr. TRY-IT-ON!!!!!.!

Admission Free. A *Collection* will be made at the Doors.
Vivat Rex!

This satire, though it presents the keenest edge of Milby wit, does not strike you as lacerating, I imagine. But hatred is like fire — it makes even light rubbish deadly. And Mr. Dempster's sarcasms were not merely visible on the walls; they were reflected in the derisive glances, and audible in the jeering voices of the crowd. Through this pelting shower of nicknames and bad puns, with an *ad libitum* accompaniment of groans, howls, hisses, and hee-haws, but of no heavier missiles, Mr. Tryan walked pale and composed, giving his arm to old Mr. Landor, whose step was feeble. On the other side of him was Mr. Jerome, who still walked firmly, though his shoulders were slightly bowed.

Outwardly Mr. Tryan was composed, but inwardly he was suffering acutely from these tones of hatred and scorn. However strong his consciousness of right, he found it no stronger armor against such weapons as derisive glances and virulent words, than against stones and clubs: his conscience was in repose, but his sensibility was bruised.

Once more only did the Evangelical curate pass up Orchard Street followed by a train of friends; once more only was there a crowd assembled to witness his entrance through the church gates. But that second time no voice was heard above a whisper, and the whispers were words of sorrow and blessing. That second time Janet Dempster was not looking on in scorn and merriment; her eyes were worn with grief and watching, and she was following her beloved friend and pastor to the grave.

CHAPTER X.

HISTORY, we know, is apt to repeat herself, and to foist very old incidents upon us with only a slight change of costume. From the time of Xerxes downwards, we have seen generals playing the braggadocio at the outset of their campaigns, and conquering the enemy with the greatest ease in

after-dinner speeches. But events are apt to be in disgusting discrepancy with the anticipations of the most ingenious tacticians; the difficulties of the expedition are ridiculously at variance with able calculations; the enemy has the impudence not to fall into confusion as had been reasonably expected of him; the mind of the gallant general begins to be distracted by news of intrigues against him at home, and, notwithstanding the handsome compliments he paid to Providence as his undoubted patron before setting out, there seems every probability that the *Te Deums* will be all on the other side.

So it fell out with Mr. Dempster in his memorable campaign against the Anti-Tryanites. After all the premature triumph of the return from Elmstoke, the battle of the Evening Lecture had been lost; the enemy was in possession of the field; and the utmost hope remaining was, that by a harassing guerilla warfare he might be driven to evacuate the country.

For some time this sort of warfare was kept up with considerable spirit. The shafts of Milby ridicule were made more formidable by being poisoned with calumny; and very ugly stories, narrated with circumstantial minuteness, were soon in circulation concerning Mr. Tryan and his hearers, from which stories it was plainly deducible that Evangelicalism led by a necessary consequence to hypocritical indulgence in vice. Some old friendships were broken asunder, and there were near relations who felt that religious differences, unmitigated by any prospect of a legacy, were a sufficient ground for exhibiting their family antipathy. Mr. Budd harangued his workmen, and threatened them with dismissal if they or their families were known to attend the evening lecture; and Mr. Tomlinson, on discovering that his foreman was a rank Tryanite, blustered to a great extent, and would have cashiered that valuable functionary on the spot, if such a retributive procedure had not been inconvenient.

On the whole, however, at the end of a few months, the balance of substantial loss was on the side of the Anti-Tryanites. Mr. Pratt, indeed, had lost a patient or two besides Mr. Dempster's family; but as it was evident that Evangelicalism had not dried up the stream of his anecdote, or in the least

altered his view of any lady's constitution, it is probable that a change accompanied by so few outward and visible signs, was rather the pretext than the ground of his dismissal in those additional cases. Mr. Dunn was threatened with the loss of several good customers, Mrs. Phipps and Mrs. Lowme having set the example of ordering him to send in his bill; and the draper began to look forward to his next stock-taking with an anxiety which was but slightly mitigated by the parallel his wife suggested between his own case and that of Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, who were thrust into a burning fiery furnace. For, as he observed to her the next morning, with that perspicacity which belongs to the period of shaving, whereas their deliverance consisted in the fact that their linen and woollen goods were not consumed, his own deliverance lay in precisely the opposite result. But convenience, that admirable branch system from the main line of self-interest, makes us all fellow-helpers in spite of adverse resolutions. It is probable that no speculative or theological hatred would be ultimately strong enough to resist the persuasive power of convenience: that a latitudinarian baker, whose bread was honorably free from alum, would command the custom of any dyspeptic Puseyite; that an Arminian with the toothache would prefer a skilful Calvinistic dentist to a bungler stanch against the doctrines of Election and Final Perseverance, who would be likely to break the tooth in his head; and that a Plymouth Brother, who had a well-furnished grocery-shop in a favorable vicinage, would occasionally have the pleasure of furnishing sugar or vinegar to orthodox families that found themselves unexpectedly "out of" those indispensable commodities. In this persuasive power of convenience lay Mr. Dunn's ultimate security from martyrdom. His drapery was the best in Milby; the comfortable use and wont of procuring satisfactory articles at a moment's notice proved too strong for Anti-Tryanite zeal; and the draper could soon look forward to his next stock-taking without the support of a Scriptural parallel.

On the other hand, Mr. Dempster had lost his excellent client, Mr. Jerome — a loss which galled him out of proportion

to the mere monetary deficit it represented. The attorney loved money, but he loved power still better. He had always been proud of having early won the confidence of a conventicle-goer, and of being able to "turn the prop of Salem round his thumb." Like most other men, too, he had a certain kindness towards those who had employed him when he was only starting in life; and just as we do not like to part with an old weather-glass from our study, or a two-feet ruler that we have carried in our pocket ever since we began business, so Mr. Dempster did not like having to erase his old client's name from the accustomed drawer in the bureau. Our habitual life is like a wall hung with pictures, which has been shone on by the suns of many years: take one of the pictures away, and it leaves a definite blank space, to which our eyes can never turn without a sensation of discomfort. Nay, the involuntary loss of any familiar object almost always brings a chill as from an evil omen; it seems to be the first finger-shadow of advancing death.

From all these causes combined, Mr. Dempster could never think of his lost client without strong irritation, and the very sight of Mr. Jerome passing in the street was wormwood to him.

One day, when the old gentleman was coming up Orchard Street on his roan mare, shaking the bridle, and tickling her flank with the whip as usual, though there was a perfect mutual understanding that she was not to quicken her pace, Janet happened to be on her own door-step, and he could not resist the temptation of stopping to speak to that "nice little woman," as he always called her, though she was taller than all the rest of his feminine acquaintances. Janet, in spite of her disposition to take her husband's part in all public matters, could bear no malice against her old friend; so they shook hands.

"Well, Mrs. Dempster, I'm sorry to my heart not to see you sometimes, that I am," said Mr. Jerome, in a plaintive tone. "But if you 've got any poor people as wants help, and you know 's deservin', send 'em to me, send 'em to me, just the same."

"Thank you, Mr. Jerome, that I will. Good-by."

Janet made the interview as short as she could, but it was not short enough to escape the observation of her husband, who, as she feared, was on his mid-day return from his office at the other end of the street, and this offence of hers, in speaking to Mr. Jerome, was the frequently recurring theme of Mr. Dempster's objurgatory domestic eloquence.

Associating the loss of his old client with Mr. Tryan's influence, Dempster began to know more distinctly why he hated the obnoxious curate. But a passionate hate, as well as a passionate love, demands some leisure and mental freedom. Persecution and revenge, like courtship and toadyism, will not prosper without a considerable expenditure of time and ingenuity, and these are not to spare with a man whose law-business and liver are both beginning to show unpleasant symptoms. Such was the disagreeable turn affairs were taking with Mr. Dempster, and, like the general distracted by home intrigues, he was too much harassed himself to lay ingenious plans for harassing the enemy.

Meanwhile, the evening lecture drew larger and larger congregations; not perhaps attracting many from that select aristocratic circle in which the Lowmes and Pittmans were predominant, but winning the larger proportion of Mr. Crewe's morning and afternoon hearers, and thinning Mr. Stickney's evening audiences at Salem. Evangelicalism was making its way in Milby, and gradually diffusing its subtle odor into chambers that were bolted and barred against it. The movement, like all other religious "revivals," had a mixed effect. Religious ideas have the fate of melodies, which, once set afloat in the world, are taken up by all sorts of instruments, some of them wofully coarse, feeble, or out of tune, until people are in danger of crying out that the melody itself is detestable. It may be that some of Mr. Tryan's hearers had gained a religious vocabulary rather than religious experience; that here and there a weaver's wife, who, a few months before, had been simply a silly slattern, was converted into that more complex nuisance, a silly and sanctimonious slattern; that the old Adam, with the pertinacity of middle age, continued to

tell fibs behind the counter, notwithstanding the new Adam's addiction to Bible-reading and family prayer; that the children in the Paddiford Sunday-school had their memories crammed with phrases about the blood of cleansing, imputed righteousness, and justification by faith alone, which an experience lying principally in chuck-farthing, hop-scotch, parental slappings, and longings after unattainable lollypop, served rather to darken than to illustrate; and that at Milby, in those distant days, as in all other times and places where the mental atmosphere is changing, and men are inhaling the stimulus of new ideas, folly often mistook itself for wisdom, ignorance gave itself airs of knowledge, and selfishness, turning its eyes upward, called itself religion.

Nevertheless, Evangelicalism had brought into palpable existence and operation in Milby society that idea of duty, that recognition of something to be lived for beyond the mere satisfaction of self, which is to the moral life what the addition of a great central ganglion is to animal life. No man can begin to mould himself on a faith or an idea without rising to a higher order of experience: a principle of subordination, of self-mastery, has been introduced into his nature; he is no longer a mere bundle of impressions, desires, and impulses. Whatever might be the weaknesses of the ladies who pruned the luxuriance of their lace and ribbons, cut out garments for the poor, distributed tracts, quoted Scripture, and defined the true Gospel, they had learned this — that there was a divine work to be done in life, a rule of goodness higher than the opinion of their neighbors; and if the notion of a heaven in reserve for themselves was a little too prominent, yet the theory of fitness for that heaven consisted in purity of heart, in Christ-like compassion, in the subduing of selfish desires. They might give the name of piety to much that was only puritanic egoism; they might call many things sin that were not sin; but they had at least the feeling that sin was to be avoided and resisted, and color-blindness, which may mistake drab for scarlet, is better than total blindness, which sees no distinction of color at all. Miss Rebecca Linnet, in quiet attire, with a somewhat excessive solemnity of countenance,

teaching at the Sunday-school, visiting the poor, and striving after a standard of purity and goodness, had surely more moral loveliness than in those flaunting peony-days, when she had no other model than the costumes of the heroines in the circulating library. Miss Eliza Pratt, listening in rapt attention to Mr. Tryan's evening lecture, no doubt found evangelical channels for vanity and egoism; but she was clearly in moral advance of Miss Phipps giggling under her feathers at old Mr. Crewe's peculiarities of enunciation. And even elderly fathers and mothers, with minds, like Mrs. Linnet's, too tough to imbibe much doctrine, were the better for having their hearts inclined towards the new preacher as a messenger from God. They became ashamed, perhaps, of their evil tempers, ashamed of their worldliness, ashamed of their trivial, futile past. The first condition of human goodness is something to love; the second, something to reverence. And this latter precious gift was brought to Milby by Mr. Tryan and Evangelicalism.

Yes, the movement was good, though it had that mixture of folly and evil which often makes what is good an offence to feeble and fastidious minds, who want human actions and characters riddled through the sieve of their own ideas, before they can accord their sympathy or admiration. Such minds, I dare say, would have found Mr. Tryan's character very much in need of that riddling process. The blessed work of helping the world forward, happily does not wait to be done by perfect men; and I should imagine that neither Luther nor John Bunyan, for example, would have satisfied the modern demand for an ideal hero, who believes nothing but what is true, feels nothing but what is exalted, and does nothing but what is graceful. The real heroes, of God's making, are quite different: they have their natural heritage of love and conscience which they drew in with their mother's milk; they know one or two of those deep spiritual truths which are only to be won by long wrestling with their own sins and their own sorrows; they have earned faith and strength so far as they have done genuine work; but the rest is dry barren theory, blank prejudice, vague hearsay. Their insight is blended with mere opinion; their sympathy is perhaps confined in narrow conduits of

doctrine, instead of flowing forth with the freedom of a stream that blesses every weed in its course; obstinacy or self-assertion will often interfuse itself with their grandest impulses; and their very deeds of self-sacrifice are sometimes only the rebound of a passionate egoism. So it was with Mr. Tryan: and any one looking at him with the bird's-eye glance of a critic might perhaps say that he made the mistake of identifying Christianity with a too narrow doctrinal system; that he saw God's work too exclusively in antagonism to the world, the flesh, and the devil; that his intellectual culture was too limited — and so on; making Mr. Tryan the text for a wise discourse on the characteristics of the Evangelical school in his day.

But I am not poised at that lofty height. I am on the level and in the press with him, as he struggles his way along the stony road, through the crowd of unloving fellow-men. He is stumbling, perhaps; his heart now beats fast with dread, now heavily with anguish; his eyes are sometimes dim with tears, which he makes haste to dash away; he pushes manfully on, with fluctuating faith and courage, with a sensitive failing body; at last he falls, the struggle is ended, and the crowd closes over the space he has left.

"One of the Evangelical clergy, a disciple of Venn," says the critic from his bird's-eye station. "Not a remarkable specimen; the anatomy and habits of his species have been determined long ago."

Yet surely, surely the only true knowledge of our fellow-man is that which enables us to feel with him — which gives us a fine ear for the heart-pulses that are beating under the mere clothes of circumstance and opinion. Our subtlest analysis of schools and sects must miss the essential truth, unless it be lit up by the love that sees in all forms of human thought and work, the life and death struggles of separate human beings.

CHAPTER XI.

Mr. Tryan's most unfriendly observers were obliged to admit that he gave himself no rest. Three sermons on Sunday, a night-school for young men on Tuesday, a cottage-lecture on Thursday, addresses to school-teachers, and catechising of school-children, with pastoral visits, multiplying as his influence extended beyond his own district of Paddiford Common, would have been enough to tax severely the powers of a much stronger man. Mr. Pratt remonstrated with him on his imprudence, but could not prevail on him so far to economize time and strength as to keep a horse. On some ground or other, which his friends found difficult to explain to themselves, Mr. Tryan seemed bent on wearing himself out. His enemies were at no loss to account for such a course. The Evangelical curate's selfishness was clearly of too bad a kind to exhibit itself after the ordinary manner of a sound, respectable selfishness. "He wants to get the reputation of a saint," said one; "He 's eaten up with spiritual pride," said another; "He 's got his eye on some fine living, and wants to creep up the Bishop's sleeve," said a third.

Mr. Stickney, of Salem, who considered all voluntary discomfort as a remnant of the legal spirit, pronounced a severe condemnation on this self-neglect, and expressed his fear that Mr. Tryan was still far from having attained true Christian liberty. Good Mr. Jerome eagerly seized this doctrinal view of the subject as a means of enforcing the suggestions of his own benevolence; and one cloudy afternoon, in the end of November, he mounted his roan mare with the determination of riding to Paddiford and "arguying" the point with Mr. Tryan.

The old gentleman's face looked very mournful as he rode along the dismal Paddiford lanes, between rows of grimy houses, darkened with hand-looms, while the black dust was

whirled about him by the cold November wind. He was thinking of the object which had brought him on this afternoon ride, and his thoughts, according to his habit when alone, found vent every now and then in audible speech. It seemed to him, as his eyes rested on this scene of Mr. Tryan's labors, that he could understand the clergyman's self-privation without resorting to Mr. Stickney's theory of defective spiritual enlightenment. Do not philosophic doctors tell us that we are unable to discern so much as a tree, except by an unconscious cunning which combines many past and separate sensations; that no one sense is independent of another, so that in the dark we can hardly taste a fricassee, or tell whether our pipe is alight or not, and the most intelligent boy, if accommodated with claws or hoofs instead of fingers, would be likely to remain on the lowest form? If so, it is easy to understand that our discernment of men's motives must depend on the completeness of the elements we can bring from our own susceptibility and our own experience. See to it, friend, before you pronounce a too hasty judgment, that your own moral sensibilities are not of a hoofed or clawed character. The keenest eye will not serve, unless you have the delicate fingers, with their subtle nerve-filaments, which elude scientific lenses, and lose themselves in the invisible world of human sensations.

As for Mr. Jerome, he drew the elements of his moral vision from the depths of his veneration and pity. If he himself felt so much for these poor things to whom life was so dim and meagre, what must the clergyman feel who had undertaken before God to be their shepherd?

"Ah!" he whispered, interruptedly, "it's too big a load for his conscience, poor man! He wants to mek himself their brother, like; can't abide to preach to the fastin' on a full stomach. Ah! he's better nor we are, that's it — he's a deal better nor we are."

Here Mr. Jerome shook his bridle violently, and looked up with an air of moral courage, as if Mr. Stickney had been present, and liable to take offence at this conclusion. A few minutes more brought him in front of Mrs. Wagstaff's, where

Mr. Tryan lodged. He had often been here before, so that the contrast between this ugly square brick house, with its shabby bit of grass-plot, stared at all round by cottage windows, and his own pretty white home, set in a paradise of orchard and garden and pasture, was not new to him; but he felt it with fresh force to-day, as he slowly fastened his roan by the bridle to the wooden paling, and knocked at the door. Mr. Tryan was at home, and sent to request that Mr. Jerome would walk up into his study, as the fire was out in the parlor below.

At the mention of a clergyman's study, perhaps, your too active imagination conjures up a perfect snuggery, where the general air of comfort is rescued from a secular character by strong ecclesiastical suggestions in the shape of the furniture, the pattern of the carpet, and the prints on the wall; where, if a nap is taken, it is in an easy-chair with a Gothic back, and the very feet rest on a warm and velvety simulation of church windows; where the pure art of rigorous English Protestantism smiles above the mantel-piece in the portrait of an eminent bishop, or a refined Anglican taste is indicated by a German print from Overbeck; where the walls are lined with choice divinity in sombre binding, and the light is softened by a screen of boughs with a gray church in the background.

But I must beg you to dismiss all such scenic prettiness, suitable as they may be to a clergyman's character and complexion; for I have to confess that Mr. Tryan's study was a very ugly little room indeed, with an ugly slap-dash pattern on the walls, an ugly carpet on the floor, and an ugly view of cottage roofs and cabbage-gardens from the window. His own person, his writing-table, and his book-case, were the only objects in the room that had the slightest air of refinement; and the sole provision for comfort was a clumsy straight-backed arm-chair, covered with faded chintz. The man who could live in such a room, unconstrained by poverty, must either have his vision fed from within by an intense passion, or he must have chosen that least attractive form of self-mortification which wears no haircloth and has no meagre days, but accepts the vulgar, the commonplace, and the ugly, whenever the highest duty seems to lie among them.

"Mr. Tryan, I hope you 'll excuse me disturbin' on you," said Mr. Jerome; "but I 'd summat partickler to say."

"You don't disturb me at all, Mr. Jerome; I 'm very glad to have a visit from you," said Mr. Tryan, shaking him heartily by the hand, and offering him the chintz-covered "easy" chair; "it is some time since I 've had an opportunity of seeing you, except on a Sunday."

"Ah, sir! your time 's so taken up, I 'm well aware o' that; it 's not only what you hev to do, but it 's goin' about from place to place; an' you don't keep a hoss, Mr. Tryan. You don't take care enough o' yourself — you don't indeed, an' that 's what I come to talk to y' about."

"That 's very good of you, Mr. Jerome; but I assure you I think walking does me no harm. It is rather a relief to me after speaking or writing. You know I have no great circuit to make. The farthest distance I have to walk is to Milby Church, and if ever I want a horse on a Sunday, I hire Radley's, who lives not many hundred yards from me."

"Well, but now! the winter 's comin' on, an' you 'll get wet i' your feet, an' Pratt tells me as your constitution 's dillicate, as anybody may see, for the matter o' that, wi'out bein' a doctor. An' this is the light I look at it in, Mr. Tryan: who 's to fill up your place, if you was to be disabled, as I may say? Consider what a valyable life yours is. You 've begun a great work i' Milby, and so you might carry it on, if you 'd your health and strength. The more care you take o' yourself, the longer you 'll live, belike, God willing, to do good to your fellow-creaturs."

"Why, my dear Mr. Jerome, I think I should not be a long-lived man in any case; and if I were to take care of myself under the pretext of doing more good, I should very likely die and leave nothing done after all."

"Well! but keepin' a hoss would n't hinder you from workin'. It 'ud help you to do more, though Pratt says as it 's usin' your voice so constant as does you the most harm. Now, is n't it — I 'm no scholard, Mr. Tryan, an' I 'm not a-goin' to dictate to you — but is n't it a'most a-killin' o' yourself, to go on a' that way beyond your strength? We must n't fling our lives away."

"No, not fling them away lightly, but we are permitted to lay down our lives in a right cause. There are many duties, as you know, Mr. Jerome, which stand before taking care of our own lives."

"Ah! I can't arguy wi' you, Mr. Tryan; but what I wanted to say's this — There's my little chacenut hoss; I should take it quite a kindness if you'd hev him through the winter an' ride him. I've thought o' sellin' him a many times, for Mrs. Jerome can't abide him; and what do I want wi' two nags? But I'm fond o' the little chacenut, an' I should n't like to sell him. So if you'll only ride him for me, you'll do me a kindness — you will, indeed, Mr. Tryan."

"Thank you, Mr. Jerome. I promise you to ask for him, when I feel that I want a nag. There is no man I would more gladly be indebted to than you; but at present I would rather not have a horse. I should ride him very little, and it would be an inconvenience to me to keep him rather than otherwise."

Mr. Jerome looked troubled and hesitating, as if he had something on his mind that would not readily shape itself into words. At last he said, "You'll excuse me, Mr. Tryan, I would n't be takin' a liberty, but I know what great claims you hev on you as a clergyman. Is it the expense, Mr. Tryan? is it the money?"

"No, my dear sir. I have much more than a single man needs. My way of living is quite of my own choosing, and I am doing nothing but what I feel bound to do, quite apart from money considerations. We cannot judge for one another, you know; we have each our peculiar weaknesses and temptations. I quite admit that it might be right for another man to allow himself more luxuries, and I assure you I think it no superiority in myself to do without them. On the contrary, if my heart were less rebellious, and if I were less liable to temptation, I should not need that sort of self-denial. But," added Mr. Tryan, holding out his hand to Mr. Jerome, "I understand your kindness, and bless you for it. If I want a horse, I shall ask for the chestnut."

Mr. Jerome was obliged to rest contented with this promise, and rode home sorrowfully, reproaching himself with not

having said one thing he meant to say when setting out, and with having "clean forgot" the arguments he had intended to quote from Mr. Stickney.

Mr. Jerome's was not the only mind that was seriously disturbed by the idea that the curate was over-working himself. There were tender women's hearts in which anxiety about the state of his affections was beginning to be merged in anxiety about the state of his health. Miss Eliza Pratt had at one time passed through much sleepless cogitation on the possibility of Mr. Tryan's being attached to some lady at a distance — at Laxeter, perhaps, where he had formerly held a curacy; and her fine eyes kept close watch lest any symptom of engaged affections on his part should escape her. It seemed an alarming fact that his handkerchiefs were beautifully marked with hair, until she reflected that he had an unmarried sister of whom he spoke with much affection as his father's companion and comforter. Besides, Mr. Tryan had never paid any distant visit, except one for a few days to his father, and no hint escaped him of his intending to take a house, or change his mode of living. No! he could not be engaged, though he might have been disappointed. But this latter misfortune is one from which a devoted clergyman has been known to recover, by the aid of a fine pair of gray eyes that beam on him with affectionate reverence. Before Christmas, however, her cogitations began to take another turn. She heard her father say very confidently that "Tryan was consumptive, and if he did n't take more care of himself, his life would not be worth a year's purchase;" and shame at having speculated on suppositions that were likely to prove so false, sent poor Miss Eliza's feelings with all the stronger impetus into the one channel of sorrowful alarm at the prospect of losing the pastor who had opened to her a new life of piety and self-subjection. It is a sad weakness in us, after all, that the thought of a man's death hallows him anew to us; as if life were not sacred too — as if it were comparatively a light thing to fail in love and reverence to the brother who has to climb the whole toilsome steep with us, and all our tears and tenderness were due to the one who is spared that hard journey.

The Miss Linnets, too, were beginning to take a new view of the future, entirely uncolored by jealousy of Miss Eliza Pratt.

"Did you notice," said Mary, one afternoon when Mrs. Pettifer was taking tea with them — "did you notice that short dry cough of Mr. Tryan's yesterday? I think he looks worse and worse every week, and I only wish I knew his sister; I would write to her about him. I'm sure something should be done to make him give up part of his work, and he will listen to no one here."

"Ah," said Mrs. Pettifer, "it's a thousand pities his father and sister can't come and live with him, if he is n't to marry. But I wish with all my heart he could have taken to some nice woman as would have made a comfortable home for him. I used to think he might take to Eliza Pratt; she's a good girl, and very pretty; but I see no likelihood of it now."

"No, indeed," said Rebecca, with some emphasis; "Mr. Tryan's heart is not for any woman to win; it is all given to his work; and I could never wish to see him with a young inexperienced wife who would be a drag on him instead of a helpmate."

"He 'd need have somebody, young or old," observed Mrs. Linnet, "to see as he wears a flannel wescoat, an' changes his stockins when he comes in. It 's my opinion he 's got that cough wi' sittin' i' wet shoes and stockins; an' that Mrs. Wagstaff 's a poor addle-headed thing; she does n't half tek care on him."

"Oh, mother!" said Rebecca, "she 's a very pious woman. And I 'm sure she thinks it too great a privilege to have Mr. Tryan with her, not to do the best she can to make him comfortable. She can't help her rooms being shabby."

"I 've nothing to say again' her piety, my dear; but I know very well I should n't like her to cook my victual. When a man comes in hungry an' tired, piety won't feed him, I reckon. Hard carrots 'ull lie heavy on his stomach, piety or no piety. I called in one day when she was dishin' up Mr. Tryan's dinner, an' I could see the potatoes was as watery as watery. It 's right enough to be speritial — I 'm no enemy to that; but I

like my potatoes mealy. I don't see as anybody 'ull go to heaven the sooner for not digestin' their dinner — providin' they don't die sooner, as mayhap Mr. Tryan will, poor dear man!"

"It will be a heavy day for us all when that comes to pass," said Mrs. Pettifer. "We shall never get anybody to fill up *that* gap. There 's the new clergyman that 's just come to Shepperton — Mr. Parry; I saw him the other day at Mrs. Bond's. He may be a very good man, and a fine preacher; they say he is; but I thought to myself, What a difference between him and Mr. Tryan! He 's a sharp-sort-of-looking man, and has n't that feeling way with him that Mr. Tryan has. What is so wonderful to me in Mr. Tryan is the way he puts himself on a level with one, and talks to one like a brother. I 'm never afraid of telling him anything. He never seems to look down on anybody. He knows how to lift up those that are cast down, if ever man did."

"Yes," said Mary. "And when I see all the faces turned up to him in Paddiford Church, I often think how hard it would be for any clergyman who had to come after him; he has made the people love him so."

CHAPTER XII.

In her occasional visits to her near neighbor Mrs. Pettifer, too old a friend to be shunned because she was a Tryanite, Janet was obliged sometimes to hear allusions to Mr. Tryan, and even to listen to his praises, which she usually met with playful incredulity.

"Ah, well," she answered one day, "I like dear old Mr. Crewe and his pipes a great deal better than your Mr. Tryan and his Gospel. When I was a little toddle, Mr. and Mrs. Crewe used to let me play about in their garden, and have a swing

between the great elm-trees, because mother had no garden. I like people who are kind; kindness is my religion; and that's the reason I like you, dear Mrs. Pettifer, though you *are* a Tryanite."

"But that's Mr. Tryan's religion too — at least partly. There's nobody can give himself up more to doing good amongst the poor; and he thinks of their bodies too, as well as their souls."

"Oh yes, yes; but then he talks about faith, and grace, and all that, making people believe they are better than others, and that God loves them more than He does the rest of the world. I know he has put a great deal of that into Sally Martin's head, and it has done her no good at all. She was as nice, honest, patient a girl as need be before; and now she fancies she has new light and new wisdom. I don't like those notions."

"You mistake him, indeed you do, my dear Mrs. Dempster; I wish you'd go and hear him preach."

"Hear him preach! Why, you wicked woman, you would persuade me to disobey my husband, would you? Oh, shocking! I shall run away from you. Good-by."

A few days after this conversation, however, Janet went to Sally Martin's about three o'clock in the afternoon. The pudding that had been sent in for herself and "Mammy," struck her as just the sort of delicate morsel the poor consumptive girl would be likely to fancy, and in her usual impulsive way she had started up from the dinner-table at once, put on her bonnet, and set off with a covered plateful to the neighboring street. When she entered the house there was no one to be seen; but in the little side-room where Sally lay, Janet heard a voice. It was one she had not heard before, but she immediately guessed it to be Mr. Tryan's. Her first impulse was to set down her plate and go away, but Mrs. Martin might not be in, and then there would be no one to give Sally that delicious bit of pudding. So she stood still, and was obliged to hear what Mr. Tryan was saying. He was interrupted by one of the invalid's violent fits of coughing.

"It is very hard to bear, is it not?" he said when she was

still again. "Yet God seems to support you under it wonderfully. Pray for me, Sally, that I may have strength too when the hour of great suffering comes. It is one of my worst weaknesses to shrink from bodily pain, and I think the time is perhaps not far off when I shall have to bear what you are bearing. But now I have tired you. We have talked enough. Good-by."

Janet was surprised, and forgot her wish not to encounter Mr. Tryan; the tone and the words were so unlike what she had expected to hear. There was none of the self-satisfied unction of the teacher, quoting, or exhorting, or expounding, for the benefit of the hearer, but a simple appeal for help, a confession of weakness. Mr. Tryan had his deeply felt troubles, then? Mr. Tryan, too, like herself, knew what it was to tremble at a foreseen trial — to shudder at an impending burthen, heavier than he felt able to bear?

The most brilliant deed of virtue could not have inclined Janet's good-will towards Mr. Tryan so much as this fellowship in suffering, and the softening thought was in her eyes when he appeared in the doorway, pale, weary, and depressed. The sight of Janet standing there with the entire absence of self-consciousness which belongs to a new and vivid impression, made him start and pause a little. Their eyes met, and they looked at each other gravely for a few moments. Then they bowed, and Mr. Tryan passed out.

There is a power in the direct glance of a sincere and loving human soul, which will do more to dissipate prejudice and kindle charity than the most elaborate arguments. The fullest exposition of Mr. Tryan's doctrine might not have sufficed to convince Janet that he had not an odious self-complacency in believing himself a peculiar child of God; but one direct, pathetic look of his had associated him with that conception forever.

This happened late in the autumn, not long before Sally Martin died. Janet mentioned her new impression to no one, for she was afraid of arriving at a still more complete contradiction of her former ideas. We have all of us considerable regard for our past self, and are not fond of casting reflections

on that respected individual by a total negation of his opinions. Janet could no longer think of Mr. Tryan without sympathy, but she still shrank from the idea of becoming his hearer and admirer. That was a reversal of the past which was as little accordant with her inclination as her circumstances.

And indeed this interview with Mr. Tryan was soon thrust into the background of poor Janet's memory by the daily thickening miseries of her life.

CHAPTER XIII.

The loss of Mr. Jerome as a client proved only the beginning of annoyances to Dempster. That old gentleman had in him the vigorous remnant of an energy and perseverance which had created his own fortune; and being, as I have hinted, given to chewing the cud of a righteous indignation with considerable relish, he was determined to carry on his retributive war against the persecuting attorney. Having some influence with Mr. Pryme, who was one of the most substantial rate-payers in the neighboring parish of Dingley, and who had himself a complex and long-standing private account with Dempster, Mr. Jerome stirred up this gentleman to an investigation of some suspicious points in the attorney's conduct of the parish affairs. The natural consequence was a personal quarrel between Dempster and Mr. Pryme; the client demanded his account, and then followed the old story of an exorbitant lawyer's bill, with the unpleasant anti-climax of taxing.

These disagreeables, extending over many months, ran along side by side with the pressing business of Mr. Armstrong's lawsuit, which was threatening to take a turn rather depreciatory of Dempster's professional prevision; and it is not surprising that, being thus kept in a constant state of irritated

excitement about his own affairs, he had little time for the further exhibition of his public spirit, or for rallying the forlorn hope of sound churchmanship against cant and hypocrisy. Not a few persons who had a grudge against him, began to remark, with satisfaction, that "Dempster's luck was forsaking him;" particularly Mrs. Linnet, who thought she saw distinctly the gradual ripening of a providential scheme, whereby a just retribution would be wrought on the man who had deprived her of Pye's Croft. On the other hand, Dempster's well-satisfied clients, who were of opinion that the punishment of his wickedness might conveniently be deferred to another world, noticed with some concern that he was drinking more than ever, and that both his temper and his driving were becoming more furious. Unhappily those additional glasses of brandy, that exasperation of loud-tongued abuse, had other effects than any that entered into the contemplation of anxious clients: they were the little superadded symbols that were perpetually raising the sum of home misery.

Poor Janet! how heavily the months rolled on for her, laden with fresh sorrows as the summer passed into autumn, the autumn into winter, and the winter into spring again. Every feverish morning, with its blank listlessness and despair, seemed more hateful than the last; every coming night more impossible to brave without arming herself in leaden stupor. The morning light brought no gladness to her: it seemed only to throw its glare on what had happened in the dim candle-light — on the cruel man seated immovable in drunken obstinacy by the dead fire and dying lights in the dining-room, rating her in harsh tones, reiterating old reproaches — or on a hideous blank of something unremembered, something that must have made that dark bruise on her shoulder, which ached as she dressed herself.

Do you wonder how it was that things had come to this pass — what offence Janet had committed in the early years of marriage to rouse the brutal hatred of this man? The seeds of things are very small: the hours that lie between sunrise and the gloom of midnight are travelled through by tiniest markings of the clock: and Janet, looking back along

the fifteen years of her married life, hardly knew how or where this total misery began; hardly knew when the sweet wedded love and hope that had set forever had ceased to make a twilight of memory and relenting, before the oncoming of the utter dark.

Old Mrs. Dempster thought she saw the true beginning of it all in Janet's want of housekeeping skill and exactness. "Janet," she said to herself, "was always running about doing things for other people, and neglecting her own house. That provokes a man: what use is it for a woman to be loving, and making a fuss with her husband, if she does n't take care and keep his home just as he likes it; if she is n't at hand when he wants anything done; if she does n't attend to all his wishes, let them be as small as they may? That was what I did when I was a wife, though I did n't make half so much fuss about loving my husband. Then, Janet had no children." . . . Ah! there Mammy Dempster had touched a true spring, not perhaps of her son's cruelty, but of half Janet's misery. If she had had babes to rock to sleep — little ones to kneel in their night-dress and say their prayers at her knees — sweet boys and girls to put their young arms round her neck and kiss away her tears, her poor hungry heart would have been fed with strong love, and might never have needed that fiery poison to still its cravings. Mighty is the force of motherhood! says the great tragic poet to us across the ages, finding, as usual, the simplest words for the sublimest fact — *δεινόν τὸ τίκτειν ἐστίν*. It transforms all things by its vital heat: it turns timidity into fierce courage, and dreadless defiance into tremulous submission; it turns thoughtlessness into foresight, and yet stills all anxiety into calm content; it makes selfishness become self-denial, and gives even to hard vanity the glance of admiring love. Yes; if Janet had been a mother, she might have been saved from much sin, and therefore from much of her sorrow.

But do not believe that it was anything either present or wanting in poor Janet that formed the motive of her husband's cruelty. Cruelty, like every other vice, requires no motive outside itself — it only requires opportunity. You do

not suppose Dempster had any motive for drinking beyond the craving for drink; the presence of brandy was the only necessary condition. And an unloving, tyrannous, brutal man needs no motive to prompt his cruelty; he needs only the perpetual presence of a woman he can call his own. A whole park full of tame or timid-eyed animals to torment at his will would not serve him so well to glut his lust of torture; they could not *feel* as one woman does; they could not throw out the keen retort which whets the edge of hatred.

Janet's bitterness would overflow in ready words; she was not to be made meek by cruelty; she would repent of nothing in the face of injustice, though she was subdued in a moment by a word or a look that recalled the old days of fondness; and in times of comparative calm would often recover her sweet woman's habit of caressing playful affection. But such days were become rare, and poor Janet's soul was kept like a vexed sea, tossed by a new storm before the old waves have fallen. Proud, angry resistance and sullen endurance were now almost the only alternations she knew. She would bear it all proudly to the world, but proudly towards him too; her woman's weakness might shriek a cry for pity under a heavy blow, but voluntarily she would do nothing to mollify him, unless he first relented. What had she ever done to him but love him too well — but believe in him too foolishly? He had no pity on her tender flesh; he could strike the soft neck he had once asked to kiss. Yet she would not admit her wretchedness; she had married him blindly, and she would bear it out to the terrible end, whatever that might be. Better this misery than the blank that lay for her outside her married home.

But there was one person who heard all the plaints and all the outbursts of bitterness and despair which Janet was never tempted to pour into any other ear; and alas! in her worst moments, Janet would throw out wild reproaches against that patient listener. For the wrong that rouses our angry passions finds only a medium in us; it passes through us like a vibration, and we inflict what we have suffered.

Mrs. Raynor saw too clearly all through the winter that

things were getting worse in Orchard Street. She had evidence enough of it in Janet's visits to her; and, though her own visits to her daughter were so timed that she saw little of Dempster personally, she noticed many indications not only that he was drinking to greater excess, but that he was beginning to lose that physical power of supporting excess which had long been the admiration of such fine spirits as Mr. Tomlinson. It seemed as if Dempster had some consciousness of this — some new distrust of himself; for, before winter was over, it was observed that he had renounced his habit of driving out alone, and was never seen in his gig without a servant by his side.

Nemesis is lame, but she is of colossal stature, like the gods; and sometimes, while her sword is not yet unsheathed, she stretches out her huge left arm and grasps her victim. The mighty hand is invisible, but the victim totters under the dire clutch.

The various symptoms that things were getting worse with the Dempsters afforded Milby gossip something new to say on an old subject. Mrs. Dempster, every one remarked, looked more miserable than ever, though she kept up the old pretence of being happy and satisfied. She was scarcely ever seen, as she used to be, going about on her good-natured errands; and even old Mrs. Crewe, who had always been wilfully blind to anything wrong in her favorite Janet, was obliged to admit that she had not seemed like herself lately. "The poor thing's out of health," said the kind little old lady, in answer to all gossip about Janet; "her headaches always were bad, and I know what headaches are; why, they make one quite delirious sometimes." Mrs. Phipps, for her part, declared she would never accept an invitation to Dempster's again; it was getting so very disagreeable to go there, Mrs. Dempster was often "so strange." To be sure, there were dreadful stories about the way Dempster used his wife; but in Mrs. Phipps's opinion, it was six of one and half-a-dozen of the other. Mrs. Dempster had never been like other women; she had always a flighty way with her, carrying parcels of snuff to old Mrs. Tooke, and going to drink tea with Mrs. Brinley, the carpenter's wife;

and then never taking care of her clothes, always wearing the same things week-day or Sunday. A man has a poor look-out with a wife of that sort. Mr. Phipps, amiable and laconic, wondered how it was women were so fond of running each other down.

Mr. Pratt having been called in provisionally to a patient of Mr. Pilgrim's in a case of compound fracture, observed in a friendly colloquy with his brother surgeon the next day —

"So Dempster has left off driving himself, I see; he won't end with a broken neck after all. You 'll have a case of meningitis and delirium tremens instead."

"Ah," said Mr. Pilgrim, "he can hardly stand it much longer at the rate he 's going on, one would think. He 's been confoundedly cut up about that business of Armstrong's, I fancy. It may do him some harm, perhaps, but Dempster must have feathered his nest pretty well; he can afford to lose a little business."

"His business will outlast him, that 's pretty clear," said Pratt; "he 'll run down like a watch with a broken spring one of these days."

Another prognostic of evil to Dempster came at the beginning of March. For then little "Mamsey" died — died suddenly. The housemaid found her seated motionless in her arm-chair, her knitting fallen down, and the tortoise-shell cat reposing on it unreproved. The little white old woman had ended her wintry age of patient sorrow, believing to the last that "Robert might have been a good husband as he had been a good son."

When the earth was thrown on Mamsey's coffin, and the son, in crape scarf and hatband, turned away homeward, his good angel, lingering with outstretched wing on the edge of the grave, cast one despairing look after him, and took flight forever.

CHAPTER XIV.

The last week in March — three weeks after old Mrs. Dempster died — occurred the unpleasant winding-up of affairs between Dempster and Mr. Pryme, and under this additional source of irritation the attorney's diurnal drunkenness had taken on its most ill-tempered and brutal phase. On the Friday morning, before setting out for Rotherby, he told his wife that he had invited "four men" to dinner at half-past six that evening. The previous night had been a terrible one for Janet, and when her husband broke his grim morning silence to say these few words, she was looking so blank and listless that he added in a loud sharp key, "Do you hear what I say? or must I tell the cook?" She started, and said, "Yes, I hear."

"Then mind and have a dinner provided, and don't go mooning about like crazy Jane."

Half an hour afterwards Mrs. Raynor, quietly busy in her kitchen with her household labors — for she had only a little twelve-year-old girl as a servant — heard with trembling the rattling of the garden gate and the opening of the outer door. She knew the step, and in one short moment she lived beforehand through the coming scene. She hurried out of the kitchen, and there in the passage, as she had felt, stood Janet, her eyes worn as if by night-long watching, her dress careless, her step languid. No cheerful morning greeting to her mother — no kiss. She turned into the parlor, and, seating herself on the sofa opposite her mother's chair, looked vacantly at the walls and furniture until the corners of her mouth began to tremble, and her dark eyes filled with tears that fell unwiped down her cheeks. The mother sat silently opposite to her, afraid to speak. She felt sure there was nothing new the matter — sure that the torrent of words would come sooner or later.

"Mother! why don't you speak to me?" Janet burst out at last; "you don't care about my suffering; you are blaming me because I feel — because I am miserable."

"My child, I am not blaming you — my heart is bleeding for you. Your head is bad this morning — you have had a bad night. Let me make you a cup of tea now. Perhaps you did n't like your breakfast."

"Yes, that is what you always think, mother. It is the old story, you think. You don't ask me what it is I have had to bear. You are tired of hearing me. You are cruel, like the rest; every one is cruel in this world. Nothing but blame — blame — blame; never any pity. God is cruel to have sent me into the world to bear all this misery."

"Janet, Janet, don't say so. It is not for us to judge; we must submit; we must be thankful for the gift of life."

"Thankful for life! Why should I be thankful? God has made me with a heart to feel, and He has sent me nothing but misery. How could I help it? How could I know what would come? Why did n't you tell me, mother? — why did you let me marry? You knew what brutes men could be; and there 's no help for me — no hope. I can't kill myself; I 've tried; but I can't leave this world and go to another. There may be no pity for me there, as there is none here."

"Janet, my child, there *is* pity. Have I ever done anything but love you? And there is pity in God. Has n't He put pity into your heart for many a poor sufferer? Where did it come from, if not from Him?"

Janet's nervous irritation now broke out into sobs instead of complainings; and her mother was thankful, for after that crisis there would very likely come relenting, and tenderness, and comparative calm. She went out to make some tea, and when she returned with the tray in her hands, Janet had dried her eyes and now turned them towards her mother with a faint attempt to smile; but the poor face, in its sad blurred beauty, looked all the more piteous.

"Mother will insist upon her tea," she said, "and I really think I can drink a cup. But I must go home directly, for

there are people coming to dinner. Could you go with me and help me, mother?"

Mrs. Raynor was always ready to do that. She went to Orchard Street with Janet, and remained with her through the day — comforted, as evening approached, to see her become more cheerful and willing to attend to her toilet. At half-past five everything was in order; Janet was dressed; and when the mother had kissed her and said good-by, she could not help pausing a moment in sorrowful admiration at the tall rich figure, looking all the grander for the plainness of the deep mourning dress, and the noble face with its massy folds of black hair, made matronly by a simple white cap. Janet had that enduring beauty which belongs to pure majestic outline and depth of tint. Sorrow and neglect leave their traces on such beauty, but it thrills us to the last, like a glorious Greek temple, which, for all the loss it has suffered from time and barbarous hands, has gained a solemn history, and fills our imagination the more because it is incomplete to the sense.

It was six o'clock before Dempster returned from Rotherby. He had evidently drunk a great deal, and was in an angry humor; but Janet, who had gathered some little courage and forbearance from the consciousness that she had done her best to-day, was determined to speak pleasantly to him.

"Robert," she said gently, as she saw him seat himself in the dining-room in his dusty snuffy clothes, and take some documents out of his pocket, "will you not wash and change your dress? It will refresh you."

"Leave me alone, will you?" said Dempster, in his most brutal tone.

"Do change your coat and waistcoat, they are so dusty. I've laid all your things out ready."

"Oh, you have, have you?" After a few minutes he rose very deliberately and walked up-stairs into his bedroom. Janet had often been scolded before for not laying out his clothes, and she thought now, not without some wonder, that this attention of hers had brought him to compliance.

Presently he called out, "Janet!" and she went up-stairs.

"Here! take that!" he said, as soon as she reached the door, flinging at her the coat she had laid out. "Another time, leave me to do as I please, will you?"

The coat, flung with great force, only brushed her shoulder, and fell some distance within the drawing-room, the door of which stood open just opposite. She hastily retreated as she saw the waistcoat coming, and one by one the clothes she had laid out were all flung into the drawing-room.

Janet's face flushed with anger, and for the first time in her life her resentment overcame the long-cherished pride that made her hide her griefs from the world. There are moments when by some strange impulse we contradict our past selves — fatal moments, when a fit of passion, like a lava stream, lays low the work of half our lives. Janet thought, "I will not pick up the clothes; they shall lie there until the visitors come, and he shall be ashamed of himself."

There was a knock at the door, and she made haste to seat herself in the drawing-room, lest the servant should enter and remove the clothes, which were lying half on the table and half on the ground. Mr. Lowme entered with a less familiar visitor, a client of Dempster's, and the next moment Dempster himself came in.

His eye fell at once on the clothes, and then turned for an instant with a devilish glance of concentrated hatred on Janet, who, still flushed and excited, affected unconsciousness. After shaking hands with his visitors he immediately rang the bell.

"Take those clothes away," he said to the servant, not looking at Janet again.

During dinner, she kept up her assumed air of indifference, and tried to seem in high spirits, laughing and talking more than usual. In reality, she felt as if she had defied a wild beast within the four walls of his den, and he was crouching backward in preparation for his deadly spring. Dempster affected to take no notice of her, talked obstreperously, and drank steadily.

About eleven the party dispersed, with the exception of Mr. Budd, who had joined them after dinner, and appeared disposed to stay drinking a little longer. Janet began to hope

that he would stay long enough for Dempster to become heavy and stupid, and so to fall asleep down-stairs, which was a rare but occasional ending of his nights. She told the servants to sit up no longer, and she herself undressed and went to bed, trying to cheat her imagination into the belief that the day was ended for her. But when she lay down, she became more intensely awake than ever. Everything she had taken this evening seemed only to stimulate her senses and her apprehensions to new vividness. Her heart beat violently, and she heard every sound in the house.

At last, when it was twelve, she heard Mr. Budd go out; she heard the door slam. Dempster had not moved. Was he asleep? Would he forget? The minute seemed long, while, with a quickening pulse, she was on the stretch to catch every sound.

"Janet!" The loud jarring voice seemed to strike her like a hurled weapon.

"Janet!" he called again, moving out of the dining-room to the foot of the stairs.

There was a pause of a minute.

"If you don't come, I'll kill you."

Another pause, and she heard him turn back into the dining-room. He was gone for a light — perhaps for a weapon. Perhaps he *would* kill her. Let him. Life was as hideous as death. For years she had been rushing on to some unknown but certain horror; and now she was close upon it. She was almost glad. She was in a state of flushed feverish defiance that neutralized her woman's terrors.

She heard his heavy step on the stairs; she saw the slowly advancing light. Then she saw the tall massive figure, and the heavy face, now fierce with drunken rage. He had nothing but the candle in his hand. He set it down on the table, and advanced close to the bed.

"So you think you'll defy me, do you? We'll see how long that will last. Get up, madam; out of bed this instant!"

In the close presence of the dreadful man — of this huge crushing force, armed with savage will — poor Janet's desperate defiance all forsook her, and her terrors came back. Trem-

bling she got up, and stood helpless in her night-dress before her husband.

He seized her with his heavy grasp by the shoulder, and pushed her before him.

"I'll cool your hot spirit for you! I'll teach you to brave me!"

Slowly he pushed her along before him, down-stairs and through the passage, where a small oil-lamp was still flickering. What was he going to do to her? She thought every moment he was going to dash her before him on the ground. But she gave no scream — she only trembled.

He pushed her on to the entrance, and held her firmly in his grasp while he lifted the latch of the door. Then he opened the door a little way, thrust her out, and slammed it behind her.

For a short space, it seemed like a deliverance to Janet. The harsh northeast wind, that blew through her thin night-dress, and sent her long heavy black hair streaming, seemed like the breath of pity after the grasp of that threatening monster. But soon the sense of release from an overpowering terror gave way before the sense of the fate that had really come upon her.

This, then, was what she had been travelling towards through her long years of misery! Not yet death. Oh! if she had been brave enough for it, death would have been better. The servants slept at the back of the house; it was impossible to make them hear, so that they might let her in again quietly, without her husband's knowledge. And she would not have tried. He had thrust her out, and it should be forever.

There would have been dead silence in Orchard Street but for the whistling of the wind and the swirling of the March dust on the pavement. Thick clouds covered the sky; every door was closed; every window was dark. No ray of light fell on the tall white figure that stood in lonely misery on the door-step; no eye rested on Janet as she sank down on the cold stone, and looked into the dismal night. She seemed to be looking into her own blank future.

CHAPTER XV.

The stony street, the bitter northeast wind and darkness — and in the midst of them a tender woman thrust out from her husband's home in her thin night-dress, the harsh wind cutting her naked feet, and driving her long hair away from her half-clad bosom, where the poor heart is crushed with anguish and despair.

The drowning man, urged by the supreme agony, lives in an instant through all his happy and unhappy past: when the dark flood has fallen like a curtain, memory, in a single moment, sees the drama acted over again. And even in those earlier crises, which are but types of death — when we are cut off abruptly from the life we have known, when we can no longer expect to-morrow to resemble yesterday, and find ourselves by some sudden shock on the confines of the unknown — there is often the same sort of lightning-flash through the dark and unfrequented chambers of memory.

When Janet sat down shivering on the door-stone, with the door shut upon her past life, and the future black and unshapen before her as the night, the scenes of her childhood, her youth and her painful womanhood, rushed back upon her consciousness, and made one picture with her present desolation. The petted child taking her newest toy to bed with her — the young girl, proud in strength and beauty, dreaming that life was an easy thing, and that it was pitiful weakness to be unhappy — the bride, passing with trembling joy from the outer court to the inner sanctuary of woman's life — the wife, beginning her initiation into sorrow, wounded, resenting, yet still hoping and forgiving — the poor bruised woman, seeking through weary years the one refuge of despair, oblivion: — Janet seemed to herself all these in the same moment that she was conscious of being seated on the cold stone under the shock of a new misery. All her early gladness, all her bright

hopes and illusions, all her gifts of beauty and affection, served only to darken the riddle of her life; they were the betraying promises of a cruel destiny which had brought out those sweet blossoms only that the winds and storms might have a greater work of desolation, which had nursed her like a pet fawn into tenderness and fond expectation, only that she might feel a keener terror in the clutch of the panther. Her mother had sometimes said that troubles were sent to make us better and draw us nearer to God. What mockery that seemed to Janet! *Her* troubles had been sinking her lower from year to year, pressing upon her like heavy fever-laden vapors, and perverting the very plenitude of her nature into a deeper source of disease. Her wretchedness had been a perpetually tightening instrument of torture, which had gradually absorbed all the other sensibilities of her nature into the sense of pain and the maddened craving for relief. Oh, if some ray of hope, of pity, of consolation, would pierce through the horrible gloom, she might believe *then* in a Divine love — in a heavenly Father who cared for His children! But now she had no faith, no trust. There was nothing she could lean on in the wide world, for her mother was only a fellow-sufferer in her own lot. The poor patient woman could do little more than mourn with her daughter: she had humble resignation enough to sustain her own soul, but she could no more give comfort and fortitude to Janet, than the withered ivy-covered trunk can bear up its strong, full-boughed offspring crashing down under an Alpine storm. Janet felt she was alone: no human soul had measured her anguish, had understood her self-despair, had entered into her sorrows and her sins with that deep-sighted sympathy which is wiser than all blame, more potent than all reproof — such sympathy as had swelled her own heart for many a sufferer. And if there was any Divine Pity, she could not feel it; it kept aloof from her, it poured no balm into her wounds, it stretched out no hand to bear up her weak resolve, to fortify her fainting courage.

Now, in her utmost loneliness, she shed no tear: she sat staring fixedly into the darkness, while inwardly she gazed at her own past, almost losing the sense that it was her own, or

that she was anything more than a spectator at a strange and dreadful play.

The loud sound of the church clock, striking one, startled her. She had not been there more than half an hour, then? And it seemed to her as if she had been there half the night. She was getting benumbed with cold. With that strong instinctive dread of pain and death which had made her recoil from suicide, she started up, and the disagreeable sensation of resting on her benumbed feet helped to recall her completely to the sense of the present. The wind was beginning to make rents in the clouds, and there came every now and then a dim light of stars that frightened her more than the darkness; it was like a cruel finger pointing her out in her wretchedness and humiliation; it made her shudder at the thought of the morning twilight. What could she do? Not go to her mother — not rouse her in the dead of night to tell her this. Her mother would think she was a spectre; it would be enough to kill her with horror. And the way there was so long . . . if she should meet some one . . . yet she must seek some shelter, somewhere to hide herself. Five doors off there was Mrs. Pettifer's; that kind woman would take her in. It was of no use now to be proud and mind about the world's knowing: she had nothing to wish for, nothing to care about; only she could not help shuddering at the thought of braving the morning light, there in the street — she was frightened at the thought of spending long hours in the cold. Life might mean anguish, might mean despair; but — oh, she must clutch it, though with bleeding fingers; her feet must cling to the firm earth that the sunlight would revisit, not slip into the untried abyss, where she might long even for familiar pains.

Janet trod slowly with her naked feet on the rough pavement, trembling at the fitful gleams of starlight, and supporting herself by the wall, as the gusts of wind drove right against her. The very wind was cruel: it tried to push her back from the door where she wanted to go and knock and ask for pity.

Mrs. Pettifer's house did not look into Orchard Street: it stood a little way up a wide passage which opened into the street through an archway. Janet turned up the archway, and

saw a faint light coming from Mrs. Pettifer's bedroom window. The glimmer of a rushlight from a room where a friend was lying, was like a ray of mercy to Janet, after that long, long time of darkness and loneliness; it would not be so dreadful to awake Mrs. Pettifer as she had thought. Yet she lingered some minutes at the door before she gathered courage to knock; she felt as if the sound must betray her to others besides Mrs. Pettifer, though there was no other dwelling that opened into the passage — only warehouses and outbuildings. There was no gravel for her to throw up at the window, nothing but heavy pavement; there was no door-bell; she must knock. Her first rap was very timid — one feeble fall of the knocker; and then she stood still again for many minutes; but presently she rallied her courage and knocked several times together, not loudly, but rapidly, so that Mrs. Pettifer, if she only heard the sound, could not mistake it. And she *had* heard it, for by-and-by the casement of her window was opened, and Janet perceived that she was bending out to try and discern who it was at the door.

"It is I, Mrs. Pettifer; it is Janet Dempster. Take me in, for pity's sake."

"Merciful God! what has happened?"

"Robert has turned me out. I have been in the cold a long while."

Mrs. Pettifer said no more, but hurried away from the window, and was soon at the door with a light in her hand.

"Come in, my poor dear, come in," said the good woman in a tremulous voice, drawing Janet within the door. "Come into my warm bed, and may God in heaven save and comfort you."

The pitying eyes, the tender voice, the warm touch, caused a rush of new feeling in Janet. Her heart swelled, and she burst out suddenly, like a child, into loud passionate sobs. Mrs. Pettifer could not help crying with her, but she said, "Come up-stairs, my dear, come. Don't linger in the cold."

She drew the poor sobbing thing gently up-stairs, and persuaded her to get into the warm bed. But it was long before Janet could lie down. She sat leaning her head on her knees

convulsed by sobs, while the motherly woman covered her with clothes and held her arms round her to comfort her with warmth. At last the hysterical passion had exhausted itself, and she fell back on the pillow; but her throat was still agitated by piteous after-sobs, such as shake a little child even when it has found a refuge from its alarms on its mother's lap.

Now Janet was getting quieter, Mrs. Pettifer determined to go down and make a cup of tea, the first thing a kind old woman thinks of as a solace and restorative under all calamities. Happily there was no danger of awaking her servant, a heavy girl of sixteen, who was snoring blissfully in the attic, and might be kept ignorant of the way in which Mrs. Dempster had come in. So Mrs. Pettifer busied herself with rousing the kitchen fire, which was kept in under a huge "raker" — a possibility by which the coal of the midland counties atones for all its slowness and white ashes.

When she carried up the tea, Janet was lying quite still; the spasmodic agitation had ceased, and she seemed lost in thought; her eyes were fixed vacantly on the rushlight shade, and all the lines of sorrow were deepened in her face.

"Now, my dear," said Mrs. Pettifer, "let me persuade you to drink a cup of tea; you 'll find it warm you and soothe you very much. Why, dear heart, your feet are like ice still. Now, do drink this tea, and I 'll wrap 'em up in flannel, and then they 'll get warm."

Janet turned her dark eyes on her old friend and stretched out her arms. She was too much oppressed to say anything; her suffering lay like a heavy weight on her power of speech; but she wanted to kiss the good kind woman. Mrs. Pettifer, setting down the cup, bent towards the sad beautiful face, and Janet kissed her with earnest sacramental kisses — such kisses as seal a new and closer bond between the helper and the helped.

She drank the tea obediently. "It *does* warm me," she said. "But now you will get into bed. I shall lie still now."

Mrs. Pettifer felt it was the best thing she could do to lie down quietly and say no more. She hoped Janet might go to sleep. As for herself, with that tendency to wakefulness

common to advanced years, she found it impossible to compose herself to sleep again after this agitating surprise. She lay listening to the clock, wondering what had led to this new outrage of Dempster's, praying for the poor thing at her side, and pitying the mother who would have to hear it all to-morrow.

CHAPTER XVI.

Janet lay still, as she had promised; but the tea, which had warmed her and given her a sense of greater bodily ease, had only heightened the previous excitement of her brain. Her ideas had a new vividness, which made her feel as if she had only seen life through a dim haze before; her thoughts, instead of springing from the action of her own mind, were external existences, that thrust themselves imperiously upon her like haunting visions. The future took shape after shape of misery before her, always ending in her being dragged back again to her old life of terror, and stupor, and fevered despair. Her husband had so long overshadowed her life that her imagination could not keep hold of a condition in which that great dread was absent; and even his absence—what was it? only a dreary vacant flat, where there was nothing to strive after, nothing to long for.

At last the light of morning quenched the rushlight, and Janet's thoughts became more and more fragmentary and confused. She was every moment slipping off the level on which she lay thinking, down, down into some depth from which she tried to rise again with a start. Slumber was stealing over her weary brain: that uneasy slumber which is only better than wretched waking, because the life we seemed to live in it determines no wretched future, because the things we do and suffer in it are but hateful shadows, and leave no impress that petrifies into an irrevocable past.

She had scarcely been asleep an hour when her movements became more violent, her mutterings more frequent and agitated, till at last she started up with a smothered cry, and looked wildly round her, shaking with terror.

"Don't be frightened, dear Mrs. Dempster," said Mrs. Pettifer, who was up and dressing; "you are with me, your old friend, Mrs. Pettifer. Nothing will harm you."

Janet sank back again on her pillow, still trembling. After lying silent a little while, she said, "It was a horrible dream. Dear Mrs. Pettifer, don't let any one know I am here. Keep it a secret. If he finds out, he will come and drag me back again."

"No, my dear, depend on me. I've just thought I shall send the servant home on a holiday — I've promised her a good while. I'll send her away as soon as she's had her breakfast, and she'll have no occasion to know you're here. There's no holding servants' tongues, if you let 'em know anything. What they don't know, they won't tell; you may trust 'em so far. But should n't you like me to go and fetch your mother?"

"No, not yet, not yet. I can't bear to see her yet."

"Well, it shall be just as you like. Now try and get to sleep again. I shall leave you for an hour or two, and send off Phœbe, and then bring you some breakfast. I'll lock the door behind me, so that the girl may n't come in by chance."

The daylight changes the aspect of misery to us, as of everything else. In the night it presses on our imagination — the forms it takes are false, fitful, exaggerated; in broad day it sickens our sense with the dreary persistence of definite measurable reality. The man who looks with ghastly horror on all his property aflame in the dead of night, has not half the sense of destitution he will have in the morning, when he walks over the ruins lying blackened in the pitiless sunshine. That moment of intensest depression was come to Janet, when the daylight which showed her the walls, and chairs, and tables, and all the commonplace reality that surrounded her, seemed to lay bare the future too, and bring out into oppressive distinctness all the details of a weary life to be lived from

day to day, with no hope to strengthen her against that evil habit, which she loathed in retrospect and yet was powerless to resist. Her husband would never consent to her living away from him: she was become necessary to his tyranny; he would never willingly loosen his grasp on her. She had a vague notion of some protection the law might give her, if she could prove her life in danger from him; but she shrank utterly, as she had always done, from any active, public resistance or vengeance: she felt too crushed, too faulty, too liable to reproach, to have the courage, even if she had had the wish, to put herself openly in the position of a wronged woman seeking redress. She had no strength to sustain her in a course of self-defence and independence: there was a darker shadow over her life than the dread of her husband — it was the shadow of self-despair. The easiest thing would be to go away and hide herself from him. But then there was her mother: Robert had all her little property in his hands, and that little was scarcely enough to keep her in comfort without his aid. If Janet went away alone he would be sure to persecute her mother; and if she *did* go away — what then? She must work to maintain herself; she must exert herself, weary and hopeless as she was, to begin life afresh. How hard that seemed to her! Janet's nature did not belie her grand face and form: there was energy, there was strength in it; but it was the strength of the vine, which must have its broad leaves and rich clusters borne up by a firm stay. And now she had nothing to rest on — no faith, no love. If her mother had been very feeble, aged, or sickly, Janet's deep pity and tenderness might have made a daughter's duties an interest and a solace; but Mrs. Raynor had never needed tendance; she had always been giving help to her daughter; she had always been a sort of humble ministering spirit; and it was one of Janet's pangs of memory, that instead of being her mother's comfort, she had been her mother's trial. Everywhere the same sadness! Her life was a sun-dried, barren tract, where there was no shadow, and where all the waters were bitter.

No! She suddenly thought — and the thought was like an

electric shock — there was one spot in her memory which seemed to promise her an untried spring, where the waters might be sweet. That short interview with Mr. Tryan had come back upon her — his voice, his words, his look, which told her that he knew sorrow. His words had implied that he thought his death was near, yet he had a faith which enabled him to labor — enabled him to give comfort to others. That look of his came back on her with a vividness greater than it had had for her in reality: surely he knew more of the secrets of sorrow than other men; perhaps he had some message of comfort, different from the feeble words she had been used to hear from others. She was tired, she was sick of that barren exhortation — Do right, and keep a clear conscience, and God will reward you, and your troubles will be easier to bear. She wanted *strength* to do right — she wanted something to rely on besides her own resolutions; for was not the path behind her all strewn with *broken* resolutions? How could she trust in new ones? She had often heard Mr. Tryan laughed at for being fond of great sinners. She began to see a new meaning in those words; he would perhaps understand her helplessness, her wants. If she could pour out her heart to him! If she could for the first time in her life unlock all the chambers of her soul!

The impulse to confession almost always requires the presence of a fresh ear and a fresh heart; and in our moments of spiritual need, the man to whom we have no tie but our common nature, seems nearer to us than mother, brother, or friend. Our daily familiar life is but a hiding of ourselves from each other behind a screen of trivial words and deeds, and those who sit with us at the same hearth are often the farthest off from the deep human soul within us, full of unspoken evil and unacted good.

When Mrs. Pettifer came back to her, turning the key and opening the door very gently, Janet, instead of being asleep, as her good friend had hoped, was intensely occupied with her new thought. She longed to ask Mrs. Pettifer if she could see Mr. Tryan; but she was arrested by doubts and timidity. He might not feel for her — he might be shocked at

her confession — he might talk to her of doctrines she could not understand or believe. She could not make up her mind yet; but she was too restless under this mental struggle to remain in bed.

"Mrs. Pettifer," she said, "I can't lie here any longer; I must get up. Will you lend me some clothes?"

Wrapt in such drapery as Mrs. Pettifer could find for her tall figure, Janet went down into the little parlor, and tried to take some of the breakfast her friend had prepared for her. But her effort was not a successful one; her cup of tea and bit of toast were only half finished. The leaden weight of discouragement pressed upon her more and more heavily. The wind had fallen, and a drizzling rain had come on; there was no prospect from Mrs. Pettifer's parlor but a blank wall; and as Janet looked out at the window, the rain and the smoke-blackened bricks seemed to blend themselves in sickening identity with her desolation of spirit and the headachy weariness of her body.

Mrs. Pettifer got through her household work as soon as she could, and sat down with her sewing, hoping that Janet would perhaps be able to talk a little of what had passed, and find some relief by unbosoming herself in that way. But Janet could not speak to her; she was importuned with the longing to see Mr. Tryan, and yet hesitating to express it.

Two hours passed in this way. The rain went on drizzling, and Janet sat still, leaning her aching head on her hand, and looking alternately at the fire and out of the window. She felt this could not last — this motionless, vacant misery. She must determine on something, she must take some step; and yet everything was so difficult.

It was one o'clock, and Mrs. Pettifer rose from her seat, saying, "I must go and see about dinner."

The movement and the sound startled Janet from her reverie. It seemed as if an opportunity were escaping her, and she said hastily, "Is Mr. Tryan in the town to-day, do you think?"

"No, I should think not, being Saturday, you know," said Mrs. Pettifer, her face lighting up with pleasure; "but he

would come, if he was sent for. I can send Jesson's boy with a note to him any time. Should you like to see him?"

"Yes, I think I should."

"Then I 'll send for him this instant."

CHAPTER XVII.

When Dempster awoke in the morning, he was at no loss to account to himself for the fact that Janet was not by his side. His hours of drunkenness were not cut off from his other hours by any blank wall of oblivion; he remembered what Janet had done to offend him the evening before, he remembered what he had done to her at midnight, just as he would have remembered if he had been consulted about a right of road.

The remembrance gave him a definite ground for the extra ill-humor which had attended his waking every morning this week, but he would not admit to himself that it cost him any anxiety. "Pooh," he said inwardly, "she would go straight to her mother's. She 's as timid as a hare; and she 'll never let anybody know about it. She 'll be back again before night."

But it would be as well for the servants not to know anything of the affair: so he collected the clothes she had taken off the night before, and threw them into a fire-proof closet of which he always kept the key in his pocket. When he went down-stairs he said to the housemaid, "Mrs. Dempster is gone to her mother's; bring in the breakfast."

The servants, accustomed to hear domestic broils, and to see their mistress put on her bonnet hastily and go to her mother's, thought it only something a little worse than usual that she should have gone thither in consequence of a violent quarrel, either at midnight, or in the early morning before they were up. The housemaid told the cook what she supposed had

happened; the cook shook her head and said, "Eh, dear, dear!" but they both expected to see their mistress back again in an hour or two.

Dempster, on his return home the evening before, had ordered his man, who lived away from the house, to bring up his horse and gig from the stables at ten. After breakfast he said to the housemaid, "No one need sit up for me to-night; I shall not be at home till to-morrow evening;" and then he walked to the office to give some orders, expecting, as he returned, to see the man waiting with his gig. But though the church clock had struck ten, no gig was there. In Dempster's mood this was more than enough to exasperate him. He went in to take his accustomed glass of brandy before setting out, promising himself the satisfaction of presently thundering at Dawes for being a few minutes behind his time. An outbreak of temper towards his man was not common with him; for Dempster, like most tyrannous people, had that dastardly kind of self-restraint which enabled him to control his temper where it suited his own convenience to do so; and feeling the value of Dawes, a steady punctual fellow, he not only gave him high wages, but usually treated him with exceptional civility. This morning, however, ill-humor got the better of prudence, and Dempster was determined to rate him soundly; a resolution for which Dawes gave him much better ground than he expected. Five minutes, ten minutes, a quarter of an hour, had passed, and Dempster was setting off to the stables in a back street to see what was the cause of the delay, when Dawes appeared with the gig.

"What the devil do you keep me here for," thundered Dempster, "kicking my heels like a beggarly tailor waiting for a carrier's cart? I ordered you to be here at ten. We might have driven to Whitlow by this time."

"Why, one o' the traces was welly i' two, an' I had to take it to Brady's to be mended, an' he did n't get it done i' time."

"Then why did n't you take it to him last night? Because of your damned laziness, I suppose. Do you think I give you wages for you to choose your own hours, and come dawdling up a quarter of an hour after my time?"

"Come, give me good words, will yer?" said Dawes, sulkily. "I'm not lazy, nor no man shall call me lazy. I know well anuff what you gi' me wages for; it's for doin' what yer won't find many men as 'ull do."

"What! you impudent scoundrel," said Dempster, getting into the gig, "you think you're necessary to me, do you? As if a beastly bucket-carrying idiot like you was n't to be got any day. Look out for a new master, then, who 'll pay you for not doing as you're bid."

Dawes's blood was now fairly up. "I 'll look out for a master as has got a better charicter nor a lyin', bletherin' drunkard, an' I should n't hev to go fur."

Dempster, furious, snatched the whip from the socket, and gave Dawes a cut which he meant to fall across his shoulders, saying, "Take that, sir, and go to hell with you!"

Dawes was in the act of turning with the reins in his hand when the lash fell, and the cut went across his face. With white lips, he said, "I 'll have the law on yer for that, lawyer as y' are," and threw the reins on the horse's back.

Dempster leaned forward, seized the reins, and drove off.

"Why, there 's your friend Dempster driving out without his man again," said Mr. Luke Byles, who was chatting with Mr. Budd in the Bridge Way. "What a fool he is to drive that two-wheeled thing! he 'll get pitched on his head one of these days."

"Not he," said Mr. Budd, nodding to Dempster as he passed; "he 's got nine lives, Dempster has."

CHAPTER XVIII.

It was dusk, and the candles were lighted before Mr. Tryan knocked at Mrs. Pettifer's door. Her messenger had brought back word that he was not at home, and all afternoon Janet had been agitated by the fear that he would not come; but as

soon as that anxiety was removed by the knock at the door, she felt a sudden rush of doubt and timidity: she trembled and turned cold.

Mrs. Pettifer went to open the door, and told Mr. Tryan, in as few words as possible, what had happened in the night. As he laid down his hat and prepared to enter the parlor, she said, "I won't go in with you, for I think perhaps she would rather see you go in alone."

Janet, wrapped up in a large white shawl which threw her dark face into startling relief, was seated with her eyes turned anxiously towards the door when Mr. Tryan entered. He had not seen her since their interview at Sally Martin's long months ago; and he felt a strong movement of compassion at the sight of the pain-stricken face which seemed to bear written on it the signs of all Janet's intervening misery. Her heart gave a great leap, as her eyes met his once more. No! she had not deceived herself: there was all the sincerity, all the sadness, all the deep pity in them her memory had told her of; more than it had told her, for in proportion as his face had become thinner and more worn, his eyes appeared to have gathered intensity.

He came forward, and, putting out his hand, said, "I am so glad you sent for me — I am so thankful you thought I could be any comfort to you." Janet took his hand in silence. She was unable to utter any words of mere politeness, or even of gratitude; her heart was too full of other words that had welled up the moment she met his pitying glance, and felt her doubts fall away.

They sat down opposite each other, and she said in a low voice, while slow difficult tears gathered in her aching eyes —

"I want to tell you how unhappy I am — how weak and wicked. I feel no strength to live or die. I thought you could tell me something that would help me." She paused.

"Perhaps I can," Mr. Tryan said, "for in speaking to me you are speaking to a fellow-sinner who has needed just the comfort and help you are needing."

"And you did find it?"

"Yes; and I trust you will find it."

"Oh, I should like to be good and to do right," Janet burst forth; "but indeed, indeed, my lot has been a very hard one. I loved my husband very dearly when we were married, and I meant to make him happy — I wanted nothing else. But he began to be angry with me for little things and . . . I don't want to accuse him . . . but he drank and got more and more unkind to me, and then very cruel, and he beat me. And that cut me to the heart. It made me almost mad sometimes to think all our love had come to that . . . I could n't bear up against it. I had never been used to drink anything but water. I hated wine and spirits because Robert drank them so; but one day when I was very wretched, and the wine was standing on the table, I suddenly . . . I can hardly remember how I came to do it . . . I poured some wine into a large glass and drank it. It blunted my feelings, and made me more indifferent. After that, the temptation was always coming, and it got stronger and stronger. I was ashamed, and I hated what I did; but almost while the thought was passing through my mind that I would never do it again, I did it. It seemed as if there was a demon in me always making me rush to do what I longed not to do. And I thought all the more that God was cruel; for if He had not sent me that dreadful trial, so much worse than other women have to bear, I should not have done wrong in that way. I suppose it is wicked to think so . . . I feel as if there must be goodness and right above us, but I can't see it, I can't trust in it. And I have gone on in that way for years and years. At one time it used to be better now and then, but everything has got worse lately: I felt sure it must soon end somehow. And last night he turned me out of doors . . . I don't know what to do. I will never go back to that life again if I can help it; and yet everything else seems so miserable. I feel sure that demon will be always urging me to satisfy the craving that comes upon me, and the days will go on as they have done through all those miserable years. I shall always be doing wrong, and hating myself after — sinking lower and lower, and knowing that I am sinking. Oh, can you tell me any way of getting strength? Have you ever known any one like me that got peace of mind and

power to do right? Can you give me any comfort — any hope?"

While Janet was speaking, she had forgotten everything but her misery and her yearning for comfort. Her voice had risen from the low tone of timid distress to an intense pitch of imploring anguish. She clasped her hands tightly, and looked at Mr. Tryan with eager questioning eyes, with parted trembling lips, with the deep horizontal lines of overmastering pain on her brow. In this artificial life of ours, it is not often we see a human face with all a heart's agony in it, uncontrolled by self-consciousness; when we do see it, it startles us as if we had suddenly waked into the real world of which this every-day one is but a puppet-show copy. For some moments Mr. Tryan was too deeply moved to speak.

"Yes, dear Mrs. Dempster," he said at last, "there *is* comfort, there *is* hope for you. Believe me there is, for I speak from my own deep and hard experience." He paused, as if he had not made up his mind to utter the words that were urging themselves to his lips. Presently he continued, "Ter years ago, I felt as wretched as you do. I think my wretchedness was even worse than yours, for I had a heavier sin on my conscience. I had suffered no wrong from others as you have, and I had injured another irreparably in body and soul. The image of the wrong I had done pursued me everywhere, and I seemed on the brink of madness. I hated my life, for I thought, just as you do, that I should go on falling into temptation and doing more harm in the world; and I dreaded death, for with that sense of guilt on my soul, I felt that whatever state I entered on must be one of misery. But a dear friend to whom I opened my mind showed me it was just such as I — the helpless who feel themselves helpless — that God specially invites to come to him, and offers all the riches of his salvation: not forgiveness only; forgiveness would be worth little if it left us under the powers of our evil passions; but strength — that strength which enables us to conquer sin."

"But," said Janet, "I can feel no trust in God. He seems always to have left me to myself. I have sometimes prayed

to him to help me, and yet everything has been just the same as before. If you felt like me, how did you come to have hope and trust?"

"Do not believe that God has left you to yourself. How can you tell but that the hardest trials you have known have been only the road by which he was leading you to that complete sense of your own sin and helplessness, without which you would never have renounced all other hopes, and trusted in his love alone? I know, dear Mrs. Dempster, I know it is hard to bear. I would not speak lightly of your sorrows. I feel that the mystery of our life is great, and at one time it seemed as dark to me as it does to you." Mr. Tryan hesitated again. He saw that the first thing Janet needed was to be assured of sympathy. She must be made to feel that her anguish was not strange to him; that he entered into the only half-expressed secrets of her spiritual weakness, before any other message of consolation could find its way to her heart. The tale of the Divine Pity was never yet believed from lips that were not felt to be moved by human pity. And Janet's anguish was not strange to Mr. Tryan. He had never been in the presence of a sorrow and a self-despair that had sent so strong a thrill through all the recesses of his saddest experience; and it is because sympathy is but a living again through our own past in a new form, that confession often prompts a response of confession. Mr. Tryan felt this prompting, and his judgment, too, told him that in obeying it he would be taking the best means of administering comfort to Janet. Yet he hesitated; as we tremble to let in the daylight on a chamber of relics which we have never visited except in curtained silence. But the first impulse triumphed, and he went on. "I had lived all my life at a distance from God. My youth was spent in thoughtless self-indulgence, and all my hopes were of a vain worldly kind. I had no thought of entering the Church; I looked forward to a political career, for my father was private secretary to a man high in the Whig Ministry, and had been promised strong interest in my behalf. At college I lived in intimacy with the gayest men, even adopting follies and vices for which I had no taste, out

of mere pliancy and the love of standing well with my companions. You see, I was more guilty even then than you have been, for I threw away all the rich blessings of untroubled youth and health; I had no excuse in my outward lot. But while I was at college that event in my life occurred, which in the end brought on the state of mind I have mentioned to you — the state of self-reproach and despair, which enables me to understand to the full what you are suffering; and I tell you the facts, because I want you to be assured that I am not uttering mere vague words when I say that I have been raised from as low a depth of sin and sorrow as that in which you feel yourself to be. At college I had an attachment to a lovely girl of seventeen; she was very much below my own station in life, and I never contemplated marrying her; but I induced her to leave her father's house. I did not mean to forsake her when I left college, and I quieted all scruples of conscience by promising myself that I would always take care of poor Lucy. But on my return from a vacation spent in travelling, I found that Lucy was gone — gone away with a gentleman, her neighbors said. I was a good deal distressed, but I tried to persuade myself that no harm would come to her. Soon afterwards I had an illness which left my health delicate, and made all dissipation distasteful to me. Life seemed very wearisome and empty, and I looked with envy on every one who had some great and absorbing object — even on my cousin who was preparing to go out as a missionary, and whom I had been used to think a dismal, tedious person, because he was constantly urging religious subjects upon me. We were living in London then; it was three years since I had lost sight of Lucy; and one summer evening, about nine o'clock, as I was walking along Gower Street, I saw a knot of people on the causeway before me. As I came up to them, I heard one woman say, 'I tell you she is dead.' This awakened my interest, and I pushed my way within the circle. The body of a woman, dressed in fine clothes, was lying against a door-step. Her head was bent on one side, and the long curls had fallen over her cheek. A tremor seized me when I saw the hair: it was light chestnut — the color of Lucy's.

I knelt down and turned aside the hair; it was Lucy — dead — with paint on her cheeks. I found out afterwards that she had taken poison — that she was in the power of a wicked woman — that the very clothes on her back were not her own. It was then that my past life burst upon me in all its hideousness. I wished I had never been born. I could n't look into the future. Lucy's dead painted face would follow me there, as it did when I looked back into the past — as it did when I sat down to table with my friends, when I lay down in my bed, and when I rose up. There was only one thing that could make life tolerable to me; that was, to spend all the rest of it in trying to save others from the ruin I had brought on one. But how was that possible for me? I had no comfort, no strength, no wisdom in my own soul; how could I give them to others? My mind was dark, rebellious, at war with itself and with God."

Mr. Tryan had been looking away from Janet. His face was towards the fire, and he was absorbed in the images his memory was recalling. But now he turned his eyes on her, and they met hers, fixed on him with the look of rapt expectation, with which one clinging to a slippery summit of rock, while the waves are rising higher and higher, watches the boat that has put from shore to his rescue.

"You see, Mrs. Dempster, how deep my need was. I went on in this way for months. I was convinced that if I ever got health and comfort, it must be from religion. I went to hear celebrated preachers, and I read religious books. But I found nothing that fitted my own need. The faith which puts the sinner in possession of salvation seemed, as I understood it, to be quite out of my reach. I had no faith; I only felt utterly wretched, under the power of habits and dispositions which had wrought hideous evil. At last, as I told you, I found a friend to whom I opened all my feelings — to whom I confessed everything. He was a man who had gone through very deep experience, and could understand the different wants of different minds. He made it clear to me that the only preparation for coming to Christ and partaking of his salvation, was that very sense of guilt and helplessness which was weigh-

ing me down. He said, You are weary and heavy-laden; well, it is you Christ invites to come to him and find rest. He asks you to cling to him, to lean on him; he does not command you to walk alone without stumbling. He does not tell you, as your fellow-men do, that you must first merit his love; he neither condemns nor reproaches you for the past, he only bids you come to him that you may have life: he bids you stretch out your hands, and take of the fulness of his love. You have only to rest on him as a child rests on its mother's arms, and you will be upborne by his divine strength. That is what is meant by faith. Your evil habits, you feel, are too strong for you; you are unable to wrestle with them; you know beforehand you shall fall. But when once we feel our helplessness in that way, and go to the Saviour, desiring to be freed from the power as well as the punishment of sin, we are no longer left to our own strength. As long as we live in rebellion against God, desiring to have our own will, seeking happiness in the things of this world, it is as if we shut ourselves up in a crowded stifling room, where we breathe only poisoned air; but we have only to walk out under the infinite heavens, and we breathe the pure free air that gives us health, and strength, and gladness. It is just so with God's spirit: as soon as we submit ourselves to his will, as soon as we desire to be united to him, and made pure and holy, it is as if the walls had fallen down that shut us out from God, and we are fed with his spirit, which gives us new strength."

"That is what I want," said Janet; "I have left off minding about pleasure. I think I could be contented in the midst of hardship, if I felt that God cared for me, and would give me strength to lead a pure life. But tell me, did you soon find peace and strength?"

"Not perfect peace for a long while, but hope and trust, which is strength. No sense of pardon for myself could do away with the pain I had in thinking what I had helped to bring on another. My friend used to urge upon me that my sin against God was greater than my sin against her; but — it may be from want of deeper spiritual feeling — that has remained to this hour the sin which causes me the bitterest pang. I

could never rescue Lucy; but by God's blessing I might rescue other weak and falling souls; and that was why I entered the Church. I asked for nothing through the rest of my life but that I might be devoted to God's work, without swerving in search of pleasure either to the right hand or to the left. It has been often a hard struggle — but God has been with me — and perhaps it may not last much longer."

Mr. Tryan paused. For a moment he had forgotten Janet, and for a moment she had forgotten her own sorrows. When she recurred to herself, it was with a new feeling.

"Ah, what a difference between our lives! you have been choosing pain, and working, and denying yourself; and I have been thinking only of myself. I was only angry and discontented because I had pain to bear. You never had that wicked feeling that I have had so often, did you? that God was cruel to send me trials and temptations worse than others have."

"Yes, I had; I had very blasphemous thoughts, and I know that spirit of rebellion must have made the worst part of your lot. You did not feel how impossible it is for us to judge rightly of God's dealings, and you opposed yourself to his will. But what do we know? We cannot foretell the working of the smallest event in our own lot; how can we presume to judge of things that are so much too high for us? There is nothing that becomes us but entire submission, perfect resignation. As long as we set up our own will and our own wisdom against God's, we make that wall between us and his love which I have spoken of just now. But as soon as we lay ourselves entirely at his feet, we have enough light given us to guide our own steps; as the foot-soldier who hears nothing of the councils that determine the course of the great battle he is in, hears plainly enough the word of command which he must himself obey. I know, dear Mrs. Dempster, I know it is hard — the hardest thing of all, perhaps — to flesh and blood. But carry that difficulty to the Saviour along with all your other sins and weaknesses, and ask him to pour into you a spirit of submission. He enters into your struggles; he has drunk the cup of our suffering to the dregs; he knows

the hard wrestling it costs us to say, 'Not my will, but Thine be done.'"

"Pray with me," said Janet — "pray now that I may have light and strength."

CHAPTER XIX.

Before leaving Janet, Mr. Tryan urged her strongly to send for her mother.

"Do not wound her," he said, "by shutting her out any longer from your troubles. It is right that you should be with her."

"Yes, I will send for her," said Janet. "But I would rather not go to my mother's yet, because my husband is sure to think I am there, and he might come and fetch me. I can't go back to him . . . at least, not yet. Ought I to go back to him?"

"No, certainly not, at present. Something should be done to secure you from violence. Your mother, I think, should consult some confidential friend, some man of character and experience, who might mediate between you and your husband."

"Yes, I will send for my mother directly. But I will stay here, with Mrs. Pettifer, till something has been done. I want no one to know where I am, except you. You will come again, will you not? you will not leave me to myself?"

"You will not be left to yourself. God is with you. If I have been able to give you any comfort, it is because his power and love have been present with us. But I am very thankful that he has chosen to work through me. I shall see you again to-morrow — not before evening, for it will be Sunday, you know; but after the evening lecture I shall be at liberty. You will be in my prayers till then. In the meantime, dear Mrs. Dempster, open your heart as much as you can to your mother and Mrs. Pettifer. Cast away from you the

pride that makes us shrink from acknowledging our weakness to our friends. Ask them to help you in guarding yourself from the least approach of the sin you most dread. Deprive yourself as far as possible of the very means and opportunity of committing it. Every effort of that kind made in humility and dependence is a prayer. Promise me you will do this."

"Yes, I promise you. I know I have always been too proud; I could never bear to speak to any one about myself. I have been proud towards my mother, even; it has always made me angry when she has seemed to take notice of my faults."

"Ah, dear Mrs. Dempster, you will never say again that life is blank, and that there is nothing to live for, will you? See what work there is to be done in life, both in our own souls and for others. Surely it matters little whether we have more or less of this world's comfort in these short years, when God is training us for the eternal enjoyment of his love. Keep that great end of life before you, and your troubles here will seem only the small hardships of a journey. Now I must go."

Mr. Tryan rose and held out his hand. Janet took it and said, "God has been very good to me in sending you to me. I will trust in him. I will try to do everything you tell me."

Blessed influence of one true loving human soul on another! Not calculable by algebra, not deducible by logic, but mysterious, effectual, mighty as the hidden process by which the tiny seed is quickened, and bursts forth into tall stem and broad leaf, and glowing tasselled flower. Ideas are often poor ghosts; our sun-filled eyes cannot discern them; they pass athwart us in thin vapor, and cannot make themselves felt. But sometimes they are made flesh; they breathe upon us with warm breath, they touch us with soft responsive hands, they look at us with sad sincere eyes, and speak to us in appealing tones; they are clothed in a living human soul, with all its conflicts, its faith, and its love. Then their presence is a power, then they shake us like a passion, and we are drawn after them with gentle compulsion, as flame is drawn to flame.

Janet's dark grand face, still fatigued, had become quite calm, and looked up, as she sat, with a humble childlike ex-

pression at the thin blond face and slightly sunken gray eyes which now shone with hectic brightness. She might have been taken for an image of passionate strength beaten and worn with conflict; and he for an image of the self-renouncing faith which has soothed that conflict into rest. As he looked at the sweet submissive face, he remembered its look of despairing anguish, and his heart was very full as he turned away from her. "Let me only live to see this work confirmed, and then —"

It was nearly ten o'clock when Mr. Tryan left, bu Janet was bent on sending for her mother; so Mrs. Pettifer, as the readiest plan, put on her bonnet and went herself to fetch Mrs. Raynor. The mother had been too long used to expect that every fresh week would be more painful than the last, for Mrs. Pettifer's news to come upon her with the shock of a surprise. Quietly, without any show of distress, she made up a bundle of clothes, and, telling her little maid that she should not return home that night, accompanied Mrs. Pettifer back in silence.

When they entered the parlor, Janet, wearied out, had sunk to sleep in the large chair, which stood with its back to the door. The noise of the opening door disturbed her, and she was looking round wonderingly, when Mrs. Raynor came up to her chair, and said, "It's your mother, Janet."

"Mother, dear mother!" Janet cried, clasping her closely. "I have not been a good tender child to you, but I *will* be — I will not grieve you any more."

The calmness which had withstood a new sorrow was overcome by a new joy, and the mother burst into tears.

CHAPTER XX.

On Sunday morning the rain had ceased, and Janet, looking out of the bedroom window, saw, above the house-tops, a shining mass of white cloud rolling under the far-away blue sky. It was going to be a lovely April day. The fresh sky, left clear and calm after the long vexation of wind and rain, mingled its mild influence with Janet's new thoughts and prospects. She felt a buoyant courage that surprised herself, after the cold crushing weight of despondency which had oppressed her the day before: she could think even of her husband's rage without the old overpowering dread. For a delicious hope — the hope of purification and inward peace — had entered into Janet's soul, and made it spring-time there as well as in the outer world.

While her mother was brushing and coiling up her thick black hair — a favorite task, because it seemed to renew the days of her daughter's girlhood — Janet told how she came to send for Mr. Tryan, how she had remembered their meeting at Sally Martin's in the autumn, and had felt an irresistible desire to see him, and tell him her sins and her troubles.

"I see God's goodness now, mother, in ordering it so that we should meet in that way, to overcome my prejudice against him, and make me feel that he was good, and then bringing it back to my mind in the depth of my trouble. You know what foolish things I used to say about him, knowing nothing of him all the while. And yet he was the man who was to give me comfort and help when everything else failed me. It is wonderful how I feel able to speak to him as I never have done to any one before; and how every word he says to me enters my heart and has a new meaning for me. I think it must be because he has felt life more deeply than others, and has a deeper faith. I believe everything he says at once. His words come to me like rain on the parched ground. It

has always seemed to me before as if I could see behind people's words, as one sees behind a screen; but in Mr. Tryan it is his very soul that speaks."

"Well, my dear child, I love and bless him for your sake, if he has given you any comfort. I never believed the harm people said of him, though I had no desire to go and hear him, for I am contented with old-fashioned ways. I find more good teaching than I can practise in reading my Bible at home, and hearing Mr. Crewe at church. But your wants are different, my dear, and we are not all led by the same road. That was certainly good advice of Mr. Tryan's you told me of last night — that we should consult some one that may interfere for you with your husband; and I have been turning it over in my mind while I 've been lying awake in the night. I think nobody will do so well as Mr. Benjamin Landor, for we must have a man that knows the law, and that Robert is rather afraid of. And perhaps he could bring about an agreement for you to live apart. Your husband 's bound to maintain you, you know; and, if you liked, we could move away from Milby and live somewhere else."

"Oh, mother, we must do nothing yet; I must think about it a little longer. I have a different feeling this morning from what I had yesterday. Something seems to tell me that I must go back to Robert some time — after a little while. I loved him once better than all the world, and I have never had any children to love. There were things in me that were wrong, and I should like to make up for them if I can."

"Well, my dear, I won't persuade you. Think of it a little longer. But something must be done soon."

"How I wish I had my bonnet, and shawl, and black gown here!" said Janet, after a few minutes' silence. "I should like to go to Paddiford Church and hear Mr. Tryan. There would be no fear of my meeting Robert, for he never goes out on a Sunday morning."

"I 'm afraid it would not do for me to go to the house and fetch your clothes," said Mrs. Raynor.

"Oh no, no! I must stay quietly here while you two go to

church. I will be Mrs. Pettifer's maid, and get the dinner ready for her by the time she comes back. Dear good woman! She was so tender to me when she took me in, in the night, mother, and all the next day, when I could n't speak a word to her to thank her."

CHAPTER XXI.

The servants at Dempster's felt some surprise when the morning, noon, and evening of Saturday had passed, and still their mistress did not reappear.

"It 's very odd," said Kitty, the housemaid, as she trimmed her next week's cap, while Betty, the middle-aged cook, looked on with folded arms. "Do you think as Mrs. Raynor was ill, and sent for the missis afore we was up?"

"Oh," said Betty, "if it had been that, she 'd ha' been back'ards an' for'ards three or four times afore now; leastways, she 'd ha' sent little Ann to let us know."

"There 's summat up more nor usal between her an' the master, that you may depend on," said Kitty. "I know those clothes as was lying i' the drawing-room yesterday, when the company was come, meant summat. I should n't wonder if that was what they 've had a fresh row about. She 's p'raps gone away, an's made up her mind not to come back again."

"An' i' the right on 't, too," said Betty. "I 'd ha' overrun him long afore now, if it had been me. I would n't stan' bein' mauled as she is by no husband, not if he was the biggest lord i' the land. It 's poor work bein' a wife at that price: I 'd sooner be a cook wi'out perkises, an' hev roast, an' boil, an' fry, an' bake, all to mind at once. She may well do as she does. I know I 'm glad enough of a drop o' summat myself when I 'm plagued. I feel very low, like, to-night; I think I shall put my beer i' the saucepan an' warm it."

"What a one you are for warmin' your beer, Betty! I could n't abide it — nasty bitter stuff!"

"It 's fine talkin'; if you was a cook you 'd know what belongs to bein' a cook. It 's none so nice to hev a sinkin' at your stomach, I can tell you. You would n't think so much o' fine ribbins i' your cap then."

"Well, well, Betty, don't be grumpy. Liza Thomson, as is at Phipps's, said to me last Sunday, 'I wonder you 'll stay at Dempster's,' she says, 'such goins-on as there is.' But I says, 'There 's things to put up wi' in ivery place, an' you may change, an' change, an' not better yourself when all 's said an' done.' Lors! why Liza told me herself as Mrs. Phipps was as skinny as skinny i' the kitchen, for all they keep so much company; and as for follyers, she 's as cross as a turkey-cock if she finds 'em out. There 's nothin' o' that sort i' the missis. How pretty she come an' spoke to Job last Sunday! There is n't a good-natur'der woman i' the world, that 's my belief — an' hansome too. I al'ys think there 's nobody looks half so well as the missis when she 's got her 'air done nice. Lors! I wish I 'd got long 'air like her — my 'air 's a-comin' off dreadful."

"There 'll be fine work to-morrow, I expect," said Betty, "when the master comes home, an' Dawes a-swearin' as he 'll niver do a stroke o' work for him again. It 'll be good fun if he sets the justice on him for cuttin' him wi' the whip; the master 'll p'raps get his comb cut for once in his life!"

"Why, he was in a temper like a fi-end this morning," said Kitty. "I dare say it was along o' what had happened wi' the missis. We shall hev a pretty house wi' him if she does n't come back — he 'll want to be leatherin' *us*, I should n't wonder. He must hev somethin' t' ill-use when he 's in a passion."

"I 'd tek care he did n't leather me — no, not if he was my husban' ten times o'er; I 'd pour hot drippin' on him sooner. But the missis has n't a sperrit like me. He 'll mek her come back, you 'll see; he 'll come round her somehow. There 's no likelihood of her coming back to-night, though; so I should think we might fasten the doors and go to bed when we like."

On Sunday morning, however, Kitty's mind became disturbed by more definite and alarming conjectures about her mistress. While Betty, encouraged by the prospect of unwonted leisure, was sitting down to continue a letter which had long lain unfinished between the leaves of her Bible, Kitty came running into the kitchen, and said —

"Lor! Betty, I 'm all of a tremble; you might knock me down wi' a feather. I 've just looked into the missis's wardrobe, an' there 's both her bonnets. She must ha' gone wi'out her bonnet. An' then I remember as her night-clothes was n't on the bed yesterday mornin'; I thought she 'd put 'em away to be washed; but she hed n't, for I 've been lookin'. It's my belief he 's murdered her, and shut her up i' that closet as he keeps locked al'ys. He 's capible on 't."

"Lors ha'-massy! why, you 'd better run to Mrs. Raynor's an' see if she 's there, arter all. It was p'raps all a lie."

Mrs. Raynor had returned home to give directions to her little maiden, when Kitty, with the elaborate manifestation of alarm which servants delight in, rushed in without knocking, and, holding her hands on her heart as if the consequences to that organ were likely to be very serious, said —

"If you please 'm, is the missis here?"

"No, Kitty; why are you come to ask?"

"Because 'm, she 's niver been at home since yesterday mornin', since afore we was up; an' we thought somethin' must ha' happened to her."

"No, don't be frightened, Kitty. Your mistress is quite safe; I know where she is. Is your master at home?"

"No 'm; he went out yesterday mornin', an' said he should n't be back afore to-night."

"Well, Kitty, there 's nothing the matter with your mistress. You need n't say anything to any one about her being away from home. I shall call presently and fetch her gown and bonnet. She wants them to put on."

Kitty, perceiving there was a mystery she was not to inquire into, returned to Orchard Street, really glad to know that her mistress was safe, but disappointed nevertheless at being told that she was not to be frightened. She was soon

followed by Mrs. Raynor in quest of the gown and bonnet. The good mother, on learning that Dempster was not at home, had at once thought that she could gratify Janet's wish to go to Paddiford Church.

"See, my dear," she said, as she entered Mrs. Pettifer's parlor; "I've brought you your black clothes. Robert's not at home, and is not coming till this evening. I could n't find your best black gown, but this will do. I would n't bring anything else, you know; but there can't be any objection to my fetching clothes to cover you. You can go to Paddiford Church now, if you like; and I will go with you."

"That's a dear mother! Then we'll all three go together. Come and help me to get ready. Good little Mrs. Crewe! It will vex her sadly that I should go to hear Mr. Tryan. But I must kiss her, and make it up with her."

Many eyes were turned on Janet with a look of surprise as she walked up the aisle of Paddiford Church. She felt a little tremor at the notice she knew she was exciting, but it was a strong satisfaction to her that she had been able at once to take a step that would let her neighbors know her change of feeling towards Mr. Tryan: she had left herself now no room for proud reluctance or weak hesitation. The walk through the sweet spring air had stimulated all her fresh hopes, all her yearning desires after purity, strength, and peace. She thought she should find a new meaning in the prayers this morning; her full heart, like an overflowing river, wanted those ready-made channels to pour itself into; and then she should hear Mr. Tryan again, and his words would fall on her like precious balm, as they had done last night. There was a liquid brightness in her eyes as they rested on the mere walls, the pews, the weavers and colliers in their Sunday clothes. The commonest things seemed to touch the spring of love within her, just as, when we are suddenly released from an acute absorbing bodily pain, our heart and senses leap out in new freedom; we think even the noise of streets harmonious, and are ready to hug the tradesman who is wrapping up our change. A door had been opened in Janet's cold dark prison of self-despair, and the golden light of morning was pouring

in its slanting beams through the blessed opening. There was sunlight in the world; there was a divine love caring for her; it had given her an earnest of good things; it had been preparing comfort for her in the very moment when she had thought herself most forsaken.

Mr. Tryan might well rejoice when his eye rested on her as he entered his desk; but he rejoiced with trembling. He could not look at the sweet hopeful face without remembering its yesterday's look of agony; and there was the possibility that that look might return.

Janet's appearance at church was greeted not only by wondering eyes, but by kind hearts, and after the service several of Mr. Tryan's hearers with whom she had been on cold terms of late, contrived to come up to her and take her by the hand.

"Mother," said Miss Linnet, "do let us go and speak to Mrs. Dempster. I'm sure there's a great change in her mind towards Mr. Tryan. I noticed how eagerly she listened to the sermon, and she's come with Mrs. Pettifer, you see. We ought to go and give her a welcome among us."

"Why, my dear, we've never spoke friendly these five year. You know she's been as haughty as anything since I quarrelled with her husband. However, let bygones be bygones: I've no grudge again' the poor thing, more particular as she must ha' flew in her husband's face to come an' hear Mr. Tryan. Yes, let us go an' speak to her."

The friendly words and looks touched Janet a little too keenly, and Mrs. Pettifer wisely hurried her home by the least frequented road. When they reached home, a violent fit of weeping, followed by continuous lassitude, showed that the emotions of the morning had overstrained her nerves. She was suffering, too, from the absence of the long-accustomed stimulus which she had promised Mr. Tryan not to touch again. The poor thing was conscious of this, and dreaded her own weakness, as the victim of intermittent insanity dreads the oncoming of the old illusion.

"Mother," she whispered, when Mrs. Raynor urged her to lie down and rest all the afternoon, that she might be the

better prepared to see Mr. Tryan in the evening — "mother, don't let me have anything if I ask for it."

In the mother's mind there was the same anxiety, and in her it was mingled with another fear — the fear lest Janet, in her present excited state of mind, should take some premature step in relation to her husband, which might lead back to all the former troubles. The hint she had thrown out in the morning of her wish to return to him after a time, showed a new eagerness for difficult duties, that only made the long-saddened sober mother tremble.

But as evening approached, Janet's morning heroism all forsook her: her imagination, influenced by physical depression as well as by mental habits, was haunted by the vision of her husband's return home, and she began to shudder with the yesterday's dread. She heard him calling her, she saw him going to her mother's to look for her, she felt sure he would find her out, and burst in upon her.

"Pray, pray, don't leave me, don't go to church," she said to Mrs. Pettifer. "You and mother both stay with me till Mr. Tryan comes."

At twenty minutes past six the church bells were ringing for the evening service, and soon the congregation was streaming along Orchard Street in the mellow sunset. The street opened toward the west. The red half-sunken sun shed a solemn splendor on the every-day houses, and crimsoned the windows of Dempster's projecting upper storey.

Suddenly a loud murmur arose and spread along the stream of church-goers, and one group after another paused and looked backward. At the far end of the street, men, accompanied by a miscellaneous group of onlookers, were slowly carrying something — a body stretched on a door. Slowly they passed along the middle of the street, lined all the way with awe-struck faces, till they turned aside and paused in the red sunlight before Dempster's door.

It was Dempster's body. No one knew whether he was alive or dead.

CHAPTER XXII.

It was probably a hard saying to the Pharisees, that "there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance." And certain ingenious philosophers of our own day must surely take offence at a joy so entirely out of correspondence with arithmetical proportion. But a heart that has been taught by its own sore struggles to bleed for the woes of another — that has "learned pity through suffering" — is likely to find very imperfect satisfaction in the "balance of happiness," "doctrine of compensations," and other short and easy methods of obtaining thorough complacency in the presence of pain; and for such a heart that saying will not be altogether dark. The emotions, I have observed, are but slightly influenced by arithmetical considerations: the mother, when her sweet lisping little ones have all been taken from her one after another, and she is hanging over her last dead babe, finds small consolation in the fact that the tiny dimpled corpse is but one of a necessary average, and that a thousand other babes brought into the world at the same time are doing well, and are likely to live; and if you stood beside that mother — if you knew her pang and shared it — it is probable you would be equally unable to see a ground of complacency in statistics.

Doubtless a complacency resting on that basis is highly rational; but emotion, I fear, is obstinately irrational: it insists on caring for individuals; it absolutely refuses to adopt the quantitative view of human anguish, and to admit that thirteen happy lives are a set-off against twelve miserable lives, which leaves a clear balance on the side of satisfaction. This is the inherent imbecility of feeling, and one must be a great philosopher to have got quite clear of all that, and to have emerged into the serene air of pure intellect, in which it is

evident that individuals really exist for no other purpose than that abstractions may be drawn from them — abstractions that may rise from heaps of ruined lives like the sweet savor of a sacrifice in the nostrils of philosophers, and of a philosophic Deity. And so it comes to pass that for the man who knows sympathy because he has known sorrow, that old, old saying about the joy of angels over the repentant sinner outweighing their joy over the ninety-nine just, has a meaning which does not jar with the language of his own heart. It only tells him, that for angels too there is a transcendent value in human pain, which refuses to be settled by equations; that the eyes of angels too are turned away from the serene happiness of the righteous to bend with yearning pity on the poor erring soul wandering in the desert where no water is; that for angels too the misery of one casts so tremendous a shadow as to eclipse the bliss of ninety-nine.

Mr. Tryan had gone through the initiation of suffering: it is no wonder, then, that Janet's restoration was the work that lay nearest his heart; and that, weary as he was in body when he entered the vestry after the evening service, he was impatient to fulfil the promise of seeing her. His experience enabled him to divine — what was the fact — that the hopefulness of the morning would be followed by a return of depression and discouragement; and his sense of the inward and outward difficulties in the way of her restoration was so keen, that he could only find relief from the foreboding it excited by lifting up his heart in prayer. There are unseen elements which often frustrate our wisest calculations — which raise up the sufferer from the edge of the grave, contradicting the prophecies of the clear-sighted physician, and fulfilling the blind clinging hopes of affection; such unseen elements Mr. Tryan called the Divine Will, and filled up the margin of ignorance which surrounds all our knowledge with the feelings of trust and resignation. Perhaps the profoundest philosophy could hardly fill it up better.

His mind was occupied in this way as he was absently taking off his gown, when Mr. Landor startled him by entering the vestry and asking abruptly —

"Have you heard the news about Dempster?"

"No," said Mr. Tryan, anxiously; "what is it?"

"He has been thrown out of his gig in the Bridge Way, and he was taken up for dead. They were carrying him home as we were coming to church, and I stayed behind to see what I could do. I went in to speak to Mrs. Dempster, and prepare her a little, but she was not at home. Dempster is not dead, however; he was stunned with the fall. Pilgrim came in a few minutes, and he says the right leg is broken in two places. It 's likely to be a terrible case, with his state of body. It seems he was more drunk than usual, and they say he came along the Bridge Way flogging his horse like a madman, till at last it gave a sudden wheel, and he was pitched out. The servants said they did n't know where Mrs. Dempster was: she had been away from home since yesterday morning; but Mrs. Raynor knew."

"I know where she is," said Mr. Tryan; "but I think it will be better for her not to be told of this just yet."

"Ah, that was what Pilgrim said, and so I did n't go round to Mrs. Raynor's. He said it would be all the better if Mrs. Dempster could be kept out of the house for the present. Do you know if anything new has happened between Dempster and his wife lately? I was surprised to hear of her being at Paddiford Church this morning."

"Yes, something has happened; but I believe she is anxious that the particulars of his behavior towards her should not be known. She is at Mrs. Pettifer's — there is no reason for concealing that, since what has happened to her husband; and yesterday, when she was in very deep trouble, she sent for me. I was very thankful she did so: I believe a great change of feeling has begun in her. But she is at present in that excitable state of mind — she has been shaken by so many painful emotions during the last two days, that I think it would be better, for this evening at least, to guard her from a new shock, if possible. But I am going now to call upon her, and I shall see how she is."

"Mr. Tryan," said Mr. Jerome, who had entered during the dialogue, and had been standing by, listening with a distressed

face, "I shall take it as a favor if you 'll let me know if iver there 's anything I can do for Mrs. Dempster. Eh, dear, what a world this is! I think I see 'em fifteen year ago — as happy a young couple as iver was; and now, what it 's all come to! I was in a hurry, like, to punish Dempster for pessecutin', but there was a stronger hand at work nor mine."

"Yes, Mr. Jerome; but don't let us rejoice in punishment, even when the hand of God alone inflicts it. The best of us are but poor wretches just saved from shipwreck: can we feel anything but awe and pity when we see a fellow-passenger swallowed by the waves?"

"Right, right, Mr. Tryan. I 'm over hot and hasty, that I am. But I beg on you to tell Mrs. Dempster — I mean, in course, when you 've an opportunity — tell her she 's a friend at the White House as she may send for any hour o' the day."

"Yes; I shall have an opportunity, I dare say, and I will remember your wish. I think," continued Mr. Tryan, turning to Mr. Landor, "I had better see Mr. Pilgrim on my way, and learn what is exactly the state of things by this time. What do you think?"

"By all means: if Mrs. Dempster is to know, there 's no one can break the news to her so well as you. I 'll walk with you to Dempster's door. I dare say Pilgrim is there still. Come, Mr. Jerome, you 've got to go our way too, to fetch your horse."

Mr. Pilgrim was in the passage giving some directions to his assistant, when, to his surprise, he saw Mr. Tryan enter. They shook hands; for Mr. Pilgrim, never having joined the party of the Anti-Tryanites, had no ground for resisting the growing conviction, that the Evangelical curate was really a good fellow, though he was a fool for not taking better care of himself.

"Why, I did n't expect to see you in your old enemy's quarters," he said to Mr. Tryan. "However, it will be a good while before poor Dempster shows any fight again."

"I came on Mrs. Dempster's account," said Mr. Tryan. "She is staying at Mrs. Pettifer's; she has had a great shock

from some severe domestic trouble lately, and I think it will be wise to defer telling her of this dreadful event for a short time."

"Why, what has been up, eh?" said Mr. Pilgrim, whose curiosity was at once awakened. "She used to be no friend of yours. Has there been some split between them? It's a new thing for her to turn round on him."

"Oh, merely an exaggeration of scenes that must often have happened before. But the question now is, whether you think there is any immediate danger of her husband's death; for in that case, I think, from what I have observed of her feelings, she would be pained afterwards to have been kept in ignorance."

"Well, there's no telling in these cases, you know. I don't apprehend speedy death, and it is not absolutely impossible that we may bring him round again. At present he's in a state of apoplectic stupor; but if that subsides, delirium is almost sure to supervene, and we shall have some painful scenes. It's one of those complicated cases in which the delirium is likely to be of the worst kind — meningitis and delirium tremens together — and we may have a good deal of trouble with him. If Mrs. Dempster were told, I should say it would be desirable to persuade her to remain out of the house at present. She could do no good, you know. I've got nurses."

"Thank you," said Mr. Tryan. "That is what I wanted to know. Good-by."

When Mrs. Pettifer opened the door for Mr. Tryan, he told her in a few words what had happened, and begged her to take an opportunity of letting Mrs. Raynor know, that they might, if possible, concur in preventing a premature or sudden disclosure of the event to Janet.

"Poor thing!" said Mrs. Pettifer. "She's not fit to hear any bad news; she's very low this evening — worn out with feeling; and she's not had anything to keep her up, as she's been used to. She seems frightened at the thought of being tempted to take it."

"Thank God for it; that fear is her greatest security."

When Mr. Tryan entered the parlor this time, Janet was again awaiting him eagerly, and her pale sad face was lighted up with a smile as she rose to meet him. But the next moment she said, with a look of anxiety —

"How very ill and tired you look! You have been working so hard all day, and yet you are come to talk to me. Oh, you are wearing yourself out. I must go and ask Mrs. Pettifer to come and make you have some supper. But this is my mother; you have not seen her before, I think."

While Mr. Tryan was speaking to Mrs. Raynor, Janet hurried out, and he, seeing that this good-natured thoughtfulness on his behalf would help to counteract her depression, was not inclined to oppose her wish, but accepted the supper Mrs. Pettifer offered him, quietly talking the while about a clothing club he was going to establish in Paddiford, and the want of provident habits among the poor.

Presently, however, Mrs. Raynor said she must go home for an hour, to see how her little maiden was going on, and Mrs. Pettifer left the room with her to take the opportunity of telling her what had happened to Dempster. When Janet was left alone with Mr. Tryan, she said —

"I feel so uncertain what to do about my husband. I am so weak — my feelings change so from hour to hour. This morning, when I felt so hopeful and happy, I thought I should like to go back to him, and try to make up for what has been wrong in me. I thought, now God would help me, and I should have you to teach and advise me, and I could bear the troubles that would come. But since then — all the afternoon and evening — I have had the same feelings I used to have, the same dread of his anger and cruelty, and it seems to me as if I should never be able to bear it without falling into the same sins, and doing just what I did before. Yet, if it were settled that I should live apart from him, I know it would always be a load on my mind that I had shut myself out from going back to him. It seems a dreadful thing in life, when any one has been so near to one as a husband for fifteen years, to part and be nothing to each other any more. Surely that is a very strong tie, and I feel as if my duty can never

lie quite away from it. It is very difficult to know what to do: what ought I to do?"

"I think it will be well not to take any decisive step yet. Wait until your mind is calmer. You might remain with your mother for a little while; I think you have no real ground for fearing any annoyance from your husband at present; he has put himself too much in the wrong; he will very likely leave you unmolested for some time. Dismiss this difficult question from your mind just now, if you can. Every new day may bring you new grounds for decision, and what is most needful for your health of mind is repose from that haunting anxiety about the future which has been preying on you. Cast yourself on God, and trust that he will direct you; he will make your duty clear to you, if you wait submissively on him."

"Yes; I will wait a little, as you tell me. I will go to my mother's to-morrow, and pray to be guided rightly. You will pray for me, too."

CHAPTER XXIII.

The next morning Janet was so much calmer, and at breakfast spoke so decidedly of going to her mother's, that Mrs. Pettifer and Mrs. Raynor agreed it would be wise to let her know by degrees what had befallen her husband, since as soon as she went out there would be danger of her meeting some one who would betray the fact. But Mrs. Raynor thought it would be well first to call at Dempster's, and ascertain how he was: so she said to Janet —

"My dear, I'll go home first, and see to things, and get your room ready. You need n't come yet, you know. I shall be back again in an hour or so, and we can go together."

"Oh no," said Mrs. Pettifer. "Stay with me till evening. I shall be lost without you. You need n't go till quite evening."

Janet had dipped into the "Life of Henry Martyn," which Mrs. Pettifer had from the Paddiford Lending Library, and her interest was so arrested by that pathetic missionary story, that she readily acquiesced in both propositions, and Mrs. Raynor set out.

She had been gone more than an hour, and it was nearly twelve o'clock, when Janet put down her book; and after sitting meditatively for some minutes with her eyes unconsciously fixed on the opposite wall, she rose, went to her bedroom, and, hastily putting on her bonnet and shawl, came down to Mrs. Pettifer, who was busy in the kitchen.

"Mrs. Pettifer," she said, "tell mother, when she comes back, I 'm gone to see what has become of those poor Lakins in Butcher Lane. I know they 're half starving, and I 've neglected them so, lately. And then, I think, I 'll go on to Mrs. Crewe. I want to see the dear little woman, and tell her myself about my going to hear Mr. Tryan. She won't feel it half so much if I tell her myself."

"Won't you wait till your mother comes, or put it off till to-morrow?" said Mrs. Pettifer, alarmed. "You 'll hardly be back in time for dinner, if you get talking to Mrs. Crewe. And you 'll have to pass by your husband's, you know; and yesterday, you were so afraid of seeing him."

"Oh, Robert will be shut up at the office now, if he 's not gone out of the town. I must go — I feel I must be doing something for some one — not be a mere useless log any longer. I 've been reading about that wonderful Henry Martyn; he 's just like Mr. Tryan — wearing himself out for other people, and I sit thinking of nothing but myself. I *must* go. Good-by; I shall be back soon."

She ran off before Mrs. Pettifer could utter another word of dissuasion, leaving the good woman in considerable anxiety lest this new impulse of Janet's should frustrate all precautions to save her from a sudden shock.

Janet having paid her visit in Butcher Lane, turned again into Orchard Street on her way to Mrs. Crewe's, and was thinking, rather sadly, that her mother's economical housekeeping would leave no abundant surplus to be sent to the

hungry Lakins, when she saw Mr. Pilgrim in advance of her on the other side of the street. He was walking at a rapid pace, and when he reached Dempster's door he turned and entered without knocking.

Janet was startled. Mr. Pilgrim would never enter in that way unless there were some one very ill in the house. It was her husband; she felt certain of it at once. Something had happened to him. Without a moment's pause, she ran across the street, opened the door, and entered. There was no one in the passage. The dining-room door was wide open — no one was there. Mr. Pilgrim, then, was already up-stairs. She rushed up at once to Dempster's room — her own room. The door was open, and she paused in pale horror at the sight before her, which seemed to stand out only with the more appalling distinctness because the noonday light was darkened to twilight in the chamber.

Two strong nurses were using their utmost force to hold Dempster in bed, while the medical assistant was applying a sponge to his head, and Mr. Pilgrim was busy adjusting some apparatus in the background. Dempster's face was purple and swollen, his eyes dilated, and fixed with a look of dire terror on something he seemed to see approaching him from the iron closet. He trembled violently, and struggled as if to jump out of bed.

"Let me go, let me go," he said in a loud, hoarse whisper; "she 's coming . . . she 's cold . . . she 's dead . . . she 'll strangle me with her black hair. Ah!" he shrieked aloud, "her hair is all serpents . . . they 're black serpents . . . they hiss . . . they hiss . . . let me go . . . let me go . . . she wants to drag me with her cold arms . . . her arms are serpents . . . they are great white serpents . . . they 'll twine round me . . . she wants to drag me into the cold water . . . her bosom is cold . . . it is black . . . it is all serpents — "

"No, Robert," Janet cried, in tones of yearning pity, rushing to the side of the bed, and stretching out her arms towards him, "no, here is Janet. She is not dead — she forgives you."

Dempster's maddened senses seemed to receive some new impression from her appearance. The terror gave way to rage.

"Ha! you sneaking hypocrite!" he burst out in a grating voice, "you threaten me . . . you mean to have your revenge on me, do you? Do your worst! I've got the law on my side . . . I know the law . . . I'll hunt you down like a hare . . . prove it . . . prove that I was tampered with . . . prove that I took the money . . . prove it . . . you can prove nothing . . . you damned psalm-singing maggots! I'll make a fire under you, and smoke off the whole pack of you . . . I'll sweep you up . . . I'll grind you to powder . . . small powder . . . (here his voice dropt to a low tone of shuddering disgust) . . . powder on the bed-clothes . . . running about . . . black lice . . . they are coming in swarms . . . Janet! come and take them away . . . curse you! why don't you come? Janet!"

Poor Janet was kneeling by the bed with her face buried in her hands. She almost wished her worst moment back again rather than this. It seemed as if her husband was already imprisoned in misery, and she could not reach him — his ear deaf forever to the sounds of love and forgiveness. His sins had made a hard crust round his soul; her pitying voice could not pierce it.

"Not there, is n't she?" he went on in a defiant tone. "Why do you ask me where she is? I'll have every drop of yellow blood out of your veins if you come questioning me. Your blood is yellow . . . in your purse . . . running out of your purse. . . . What! you're changing it into toads, are you? They're crawling . . . they're flying . . . they're flying about my head . . . the toads are flying about. Ostler! ostler! bring out my gig . . . bring it out, you lazy beast . . . ha! you'll follow me, will you? . . . you'll fly about my head . . . you've got fiery tongues . . . Ostler! curse you! why don't you come? Janet! come and take the toads away . . . Janet!"

This last time he uttered her name with such a shriek of terror, that Janet involuntarily started up from her knees,

and stood as if petrified by the horrible vibration. Dempster stared wildly in silence for some moments; then he spoke again in a hoarse whisper —

"Dead . . . is she dead? *She* did it, then. She buried herself in the iron chest . . . she left her clothes out, though . . . she is n't dead . . . why do you pretend she 's dead? . . . she 's coming . . . she 's coming out of the iron closet . . . there are the black serpents . . . stop her . . . let me go . . . stop her . . . she wants to drag me away into the cold black water . . . her bosom is black . . . it is all serpents . . . they are getting longer . . . the great white serpents are getting longer —"

Here Mr. Pilgrim came forward with the apparatus to bind him, but Dempster's struggles became more and more violent. "Ostler! ostler!" he shouted, "bring out the gig . . . give me the whip!" — and bursting loose from the strong hands that held him, he began to flog the bed-clothes furiously with his right arm.

"Get along, you lame brute! — sc— sc— sc! that 's it! there you go! They think they 've outwitted me, do they? The sneaking idiots! I 'll be up with them by-and-by. I 'll make them say the Lord's Prayer backwards . . . I 'll pepper them so that the devil shall eat them raw . . . sc— sc— sc — we shall see who 'll be the winner yet . . . get along, you damned limping beast . . . I 'll lay your back open . . . I 'll —"

He raised himself with a stronger effort than ever to flog the bed-clothes, and fell back in convulsions. Janet gave a scream, and sank on her knees again. She thought he was dead.

As soon as Mr. Pilgrim was able to give her a moment's attention, he came to her, and, taking her by the arm, attempted to draw her gently out of the room.

"Now, my dear Mrs. Dempster, let me persuade you not to remain in the room at present. We shall soon relieve these symptoms, I hope; it is nothing but the delirium that ordinarily attends such cases."

"Oh, what is the matter? what brought it on?"

"He fell out of the gig; the right leg is broken. It is a terrible accident, and I don't disguise that there is considerable danger attending it, owing to the state of the brain. But Mr. Dempster has a strong constitution, you know; in a few days these symptoms may be allayed, and he may do well. Let me beg of you to keep out of the room at present: you can do no good until Mr. Dempster is better, and able to know you. But you ought not to be alone; let me advise you to have Mrs. Raynor with you."

"Yes, I will send for mother. But you must not object to my being in the room. I shall be very quiet now, only just at first the shock was so great; I knew nothing about it. I can help the nurses a great deal; I can put the cold things to his head. He may be sensible for a moment and know me. Pray do not say any more against it: my heart is set on being with him."

Mr. Pilgrim gave way, and Janet, having sent for her mother and put off her bonnet and shawl, returned to take her place by the side of her husband's bed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Day after day, with only short intervals of rest, Janet kept her place in that sad chamber. No wonder the sick-room and the lazaretto have so often been a refuge from the tossings of intellectual doubt, — a place of repose for the worn and wounded spirit. Here is a duty about which all creeds and all philosophies are at one; here, at least, the conscience will not be dogged by doubt, the benign impulse will not be checked by adverse theory; here you may begin to act without settling one preliminary question. To moisten the sufferer's parched lips through the long night-watches, to bear up the drooping head, to lift the helpless limbs, to divine the want that can find no utterance beyond the feeble motion of the hand or

beseeching glance of the eye — these are offices that demand no self-questionings, no casuistry, no assent to propositions, no weighing of consequences. Within the four walls where the stir and glare of the world are shut out, and every voice is subdued — where a human being lies prostrate, thrown on the tender mercies of his fellow, the moral relation of man to man is reduced to its utmost clearness and simplicity: bigotry cannot confuse it, theory cannot pervert it, passion, awed into quiescence, can neither pollute nor perturb it. As we bend over the sick-bed, all the forces of our nature rush towards the channels of pity, of patience, and of love, and sweep down the miserable choking drift of our quarrels, our debates, our would-be wisdom, and our clamorous selfish desires. This blessing of serene freedom from the importunities of opinion lies in all simple direct acts of mercy, and is one source of that sweet calm which is often felt by the watcher in the sick-room, even when the duties there are of a hard and terrible kind.

Something of that benign result was felt by Janet during her tendance in her husband's chamber. When the first heart-piercing hours were over — when her horror at his delirium was no longer fresh, she began to be conscious of her relief from the burthen of decision as to her future course. The question that agitated her, about returning to her husband, had been solved in a moment; and this illness, after all, might be the herald of another blessing, just as that dreadful midnight when she stood an outcast in cold and darkness had been followed by the dawn of a new hope. Robert would get better; this illness might alter him; he would be a long time feeble, needing help, walking with a crutch, perhaps. She would wait on him with such tenderness, such all-forgiving love, that the old harshness and cruelty must melt away forever under the heart-sunshine she would pour around him. Her bosom heaved at the thought, and delicious tears fell. Janet's was a nature in which hatred and revenge could find no place; the long bitter years drew half their bitterness from her ever-living remembrance of the too short years of love that went before; and the thought that her husband would ever put her hand to his lips again, and recall the days when

they sat on the grass together, and he laid scarlet poppies on her black hair, and called her his gypsy queen, seemed to send a tide of loving oblivion over all the harsh and stony space they had traversed since. The Divine Love that had already shone upon her would be with her; she would lift up her soul continually for help; Mr. Tryan, she knew, would pray for her. If she felt herself failing, she would confess it to him at once; if her feet began to slip, there was that stay for her to cling to. Oh, she could never be drawn back into that cold damp vault of sin and despair again; she had felt the morning sun, she had tasted the sweet pure air of trust and penitence and submission.

These were the thoughts passing through Janet's mind as she hovered about her husband's bed, and these were the hopes she poured out to Mr. Tryan when he called to see her. It was so evident that they were strengthening her in her new struggle — they shed such a glow of calm enthusiasm over her face as she spoke of them, that Mr. Tryan could not bear to throw on them the chill of premonitory doubts, though a previous conversation he had had with Mr. Pilgrim had convinced him that there was not the faintest probability of Dempster's recovery. Poor Janet did not know the significance of the changing symptoms, and when, after the lapse of a week, the delirium began to lose some of its violence, and to be interrupted by longer and longer intervals of stupor, she tried to think that these might be steps on the way to recovery, and she shrank from questioning Mr. Pilgrim lest he should confirm the fears that began to get predominance in her mind. But before many days were past, he thought it right not to allow her to blind herself any longer. One day — it was just about noon, when bad news always seems most sickening — he led her from her husband's chamber into the opposite drawing-room, where Mrs. Raynor was sitting, and said to her, in that low tone of sympathetic feeling which sometimes gave a sudden air of gentleness to this rough man —

"My dear Mrs. Dempster, it is right in these cases, you know, to be prepared for the worst. I think I shall be saving you pain by preventing you from entertaining any false hopes,

and Mr. Dempster's state is now such that I fear we must consider recovery impossible. The affection of the brain might not have been hopeless, but, you see, there is a terrible complication; and I am grieved to say the broken limb is mortifying."

Janet listened with a sinking heart. That future of love and forgiveness would never come, then: he was going out of her sight forever, where her pity could never reach him. She turned cold, and trembled.

"But do you think he will die," she said, "without ever coming to himself? without ever knowing me?"

"One cannot say that with certainty. It is not impossible that the cerebral oppression may subside, and that he may become conscious. If there is anything you would wish to be said or done in that case, it would be well to be prepared. I should think," Mr. Pilgrim continued, turning to Mrs. Raynor, "Mr. Dempster's affairs are likely to be in order — his will is —"

"Oh, I would n't have him troubled about those things," interrupted Janet, "he has no relations but quite distant ones — no one but me. I would n't take up the time with that. I only want to —"

She was unable to finish; she felt her sobs rising, and left the room. "O God," she said, inwardly, "is not Thy love greater than mine? Have mercy on him! have mercy on him!"

This happened on Wednesday, ten days after the fatal accident. By the following Sunday, Dempster was in a state of rapidly increasing prostration; and when Mr. Pilgrim, who, in turn with his assistant, had slept in the house from the beginning, came in, about half-past ten, as usual, he scarcely believed that the feebly struggling life would last out till morning. For the last few days he had been administering stimulants to relieve the exhaustion which had succeeded the alternations of delirium and stupor. This slight office was all that now remained to be done for the patient; so at eleven o'clock Mr. Pilgrim went to bed, having given directions to the nurse, and desired her to call him if any change took place, or if Mrs. Dempster desired his presence.

Janet could not be persuaded to leave the room. She was yearning and watching for a moment in which her husband's eyes would rest consciously upon her, and he would know that she had forgiven him.

How changed he was since that terrible Monday, nearly a fortnight ago! He lay motionless, but for the irregular breathing that stirred his broad chest and thick muscular neck. His features were no longer purple and swollen; they were pale, sunken, and haggard. A cold perspiration stood in beads on the protuberant forehead, and on the wasted hands stretched motionless on the bed-clothes. It was better to see the hands so, than convulsively picking the air, as they had been a week ago.

Janet sat on the edge of the bed through the long hours of candle-light, watching the unconscious half-closed eyes, wiping the perspiration from the brow and cheeks, and keeping her left hand on the cold unanswering right hand that lay beside her on the bed-clothes. She was almost as pale as her dying husband, and there were dark lines under her eyes, for this was the third night since she had taken off her clothes; but the eager straining gaze of her dark eyes, and the acute sensibility that lay in every line about her mouth, made a strange contrast with the blank unconsciousness and emaciated animalism of the face she was watching.

There was profound stillness in the house. She heard no sound but her husband's breathing and the ticking of the watch on the mantel-piece. The candle, placed high up, shed a soft light down on the one object she cared to see. There was a smell of brandy in the room; it was given to her husband from time to time; but this smell, which at first had produced in her a faint shuddering sensation, was now becoming indifferent to her: she did not even perceive it; she was too unconscious of herself to feel either temptations or accusations. She only felt that the husband of her youth was dying; far, far out of her reach, as if she were standing helpless on the shore, while he was sinking in the black storm-waves; she only yearned for one moment in which she might satisfy the deep forgiving pity of her soul by one look of love, one word of tenderness.

Her sensations and thoughts were so persistent that she could not measure the hours, and it was a surprise to her when the nurse put out the candle, and let in the faint morning light. Mrs. Raynor, anxious about Janet, was already up, and now brought in some fresh coffee for her; and Mr. Pilgrim having awaked, had hurried on his clothes, and was come in to see how Dempster was.

This change from candle light to morning, this recommencement of the same round of things that had happened yesterday, was a discouragement rather than a relief to Janet. She was more conscious of her chill weariness; the new light thrown on her husband's face seemed to reveal the still work that death had been doing through the night; she felt her last lingering hope that he would ever know her again forsake her.

But now, Mr. Pilgrim, having felt the pulse, was putting some brandy in a tea-spoon between Dempster's lips; the brandy went down, and his breathing became freer. Janet noticed the change, and her heart beat faster as she leaned forward to watch him. Suddenly a slight movement, like the passing away of a shadow, was visible in his face, and he opened his eyes full on Janet.

It was almost like meeting him again on the resurrection morning, after the night of the grave.

"Robert, do you know me?"

He kept his eyes fixed on her, and there was a faintly perceptible motion of the lips, as if he wanted to speak.

But the moment of speech was forever gone — the moment for asking pardon of her, if he wanted to ask it. Could he read the full forgiveness that was written in her eyes? She never knew; for, as she was bending to kiss him, the thick veil of death fell between them, and her lips touched a corpse.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE faces looked very hard and unmoved that surrounded Dempster's grave, while old Mr. Crewe read the burial-service in his low, broken voice. The pall-bearers were such men as Mr. Pittman, Mr. Lowme, and Mr. Budd — men whom Dempster had called his friends while he was in life; and worldly faces never look so worldly as at a funeral. They have the same effect of grating incongruity as the sound of a coarse voice breaking the solemn silence of night.

The one face that had sorrow in it was covered by a thick crape veil, and the sorrow was suppressed and silent. No one knew how deep it was; for the thought in most of her neighbors' minds was, that Mrs. Dempster could hardly have had better fortune than to lose a bad husband who had left her the compensation of a good income. They found it difficult to conceive that her husband's death could be felt by her otherwise than as a deliverance. The person who was most thoroughly convinced that Janet's grief was deep and real, was Mr. Pilgrim, who in general was not at all weakly given to a belief in disinterested feeling.

"That woman has a tender heart," he was frequently heard to observe in his morning rounds about this time. "I used to think there was a great deal of palaver in her, but you may depend upon it there 's no pretence about her. If he 'd been the kindest husband in the world she could n't have felt more. There 's a great deal of good in Mrs. Dempster — a great deal of good."

"*I* always said so," was Mrs. Lowme's reply, when he made the observation to her; "she was always so very full of pretty attentions to me when I was ill. But they tell me now she 's turned Tryanite; if that 's it we shan't agree again. It 's very inconsistent in her, I think, turning round in that way, after being the foremost to laugh at the Tryanite cant, and

especially in a woman of her habits; she should cure herself of *them* before she pretends to be over-religious."

"Well, I think she means to cure herself, do you know," said Mr. Pilgrim, whose good-will towards Janet was just now quite above that temperate point at which he could indulge his feminine patients with a little judicious detraction. "I feel sure she has not taken any stimulants all through her husband's illness; and she has been constantly in the way of them. I can see she sometimes suffers a good deal of depression for want of them — it shows all the more resolution in her. Those cures are rare; but I've known them happen sometimes with people of strong will."

Mrs. Lowme took an opportunity of retailing Mr. Pilgrim's conversation to Mrs. Phipps, who, as a victim of Pratt and plethora, could rarely enjoy that pleasure at first-hand. Mrs. Phipps was a woman of decided opinions, though of wheezy utterance.

"For my part," she remarked, "I'm glad to hear there's any likelihood of improvement in Mrs. Dempster, but I think the way things have turned out seems to show that she was more to blame than people thought she was; else, why should she feel so much about her husband? And Dempster, I understand, has left his wife pretty nearly all his property to do as she likes with; *that* isn't behaving like such a very bad husband. I don't believe Mrs. Dempster can have had so much provocation as they pretended. I've known husbands who've laid plans for tormenting their wives when they're underground — tying up their money and hindering them from marrying again. Not that *I* should ever wish to marry again; I think one husband in one's life is enough in all conscience;" — here she threw a fierce glance at the amiable Mr. Phipps, who was innocently delighting himself with the *facetiæ* in the "Rotherby Guardian," and thinking the editor must be a droll fellow — "but it's aggravating to be tied up in that way. Why, they say Mrs. Dempster will have as good as six hundred a-year at least. A fine thing for her, that was a poor girl without a farthing to her fortune. It's well if she doesn't make ducks and drakes of it somehow."

Mrs. Phipps's view of Janet, however, was far from being the prevalent one in Milby. Even neighbors who had no strong personal interest in her, could hardly see the noble-looking woman in her widow's dress, with a sad sweet gravity in her face, and not be touched with fresh admiration for her — and not feel, at least vaguely, that she had entered on a new life in which it was a sort of desecration to allude to the painful past. And the old friends who had a real regard for her, but whose cordiality had been repelled or chilled of late years, now came round her with hearty demonstrations of affection. Mr. Jerome felt that his happiness had a substantial addition now he could once more call on that "nice little woman Mrs. Dempster," and think of her with rejoicing instead of sorrow. The Pratts lost no time in returning to the footing of old-established friendship with Janet and her mother; and Miss Pratt felt it incumbent on her, on all suitable occasions, to deliver a very emphatic approval of the remarkable strength of mind she understood Mrs. Dempster to be exhibiting. The Miss Linnets were eager to meet Mr. Tryan's wishes by greeting Janet as one who was likely to be a sister in religious feeling and good works; and Mrs. Linnet was so agreeably surprised by the fact that Dempster had left his wife the money "in that handsome way, to do what she liked with it," that she even included Dempster himself, and his villanous discovery of the flaw in her title to Pye's Croft, in her magnanimous oblivion of past offences. She and Mrs. Jerome agreed over a friendly cup of tea that there were "a many husbands as was very fine spoken an' all that, an' yet all the while kep' a will locked up from you, as tied you up as tight as anything. I assure *you*," Mrs. Jerome continued, dropping her voice in a confidential manner, "I know no more to this day about Mr. Jerome's will, nor the child as is unborn. I 've no fears about a income — I 'm well aware Mr. Jerome 'ud niver leave me stret for that; but I should like to hev a thou sand or two at my own disposial; it makes a widow a deal more looked on."

Perhaps this ground of respect to widows might not be entirely without its influence on the Milby mind, and might do

something towards conciliating those more aristocratic acquaintances of Janet's, who would otherwise have been inclined to take the severest view of her apostasy towards Evangelicalism. Errors look so very ugly in persons of small means — one feels they are taking quite a liberty in going astray; whereas people of fortune may naturally indulge in a few delinquencies. "They 've got the money for it," as the girl said of her mistress who had made herself ill with pickled salmon. However it may have been, there was not an acquaintance of Janet's, in Milby, that did not offer her civilities in the early days of her widowhood. Even the severe Mrs. Phipps was not an exception; for heaven knows what would become of our sociality if we never visited people we speak ill of: we should live, like Egyptian hermits, in crowded solitude.

Perhaps the attentions most grateful to Janet were those of her old friend Mrs. Crewe, whose attachment to her favorite proved quite too strong for any resentment she might be supposed to feel on the score of Mr. Tryan. The little deaf old lady could n't do without her accustomed visitor, whom she had seen grow up from child to woman, always so willing to chat with her and tell her all the news, though she was deaf; while other people thought it tiresome to shout in her ear, and irritated her by recommending ear-trumpets of various construction.

All this friendliness was very precious to Janet. She was conscious of the aid it gave her in the self-conquest which was the blessing she prayed for with every fresh morning. The chief strength of her nature lay in her affection, which colored all the rest of her mind: it gave a personal sisterly tenderness to her acts of benevolence; it made her cling with tenacity to every object that had once stirred her kindly emotions. Alas! it was unsatisfied, wounded affection that had made her trouble greater than she could bear. And now there was no check to the full flow of that plenteous current in her nature — no gnawing secret anguish — no overhanging terror — no inward shame. Friendly faces beamed on her; she felt that friendly hearts were approving her, and wishing her well, and that mild sunshine of good-will fell beneficently on her new hopes

and efforts, as the clear shining after rain falls on the tender leaf-buds of spring, and wins them from promise to fulfilment.

And she needed these secondary helps, for her wrestling with her past self was not always easy. The strong emotions from which the life of a human being receives a new bias, win their victory as the sea wins his: though their advance may be sure, they will often, after a mightier wave than usual, seem to roll back so far as to lose all the ground they had made. Janet showed the strong bent of her will by taking every outward precaution against the occurrence of a temptation. Her mother was now her constant companion, having shut up her little dwelling and come to reside in Orchard Street; and Janet gave all dangerous keys into her keeping, entreating her to lock them away in some secret place. Whenever the too well-known depression and craving threatened her, she would seek a refuge in what had always been her purest enjoyment — in visiting one of her poor neighbors, in carrying some food or comfort to a sick-bed, in cheering with her smile some of the familiar dwellings up the dingy back lanes. But the great source of courage, the great help to perseverance, was the sense that she had a friend and teacher in Mr. Tryan: she could confess her difficulties to him; she knew he prayed for her; she had always before her the prospect of soon seeing him, and hearing words of admonition and comfort, that came to her charged with a divine power such as she had never found in human words before.

So the time passed, till it was far on in May, nearly a month after her husband's death, when, as she and her mother were seated peacefully at breakfast in the dining-room, looking through the open window at the old-fashioned garden, where the grass-plot was now whitened with apple-blossoms, a letter was brought in for Mrs. Raynor.

"Why, there 's the Thurston post-mark on it," she said. "It must be about your aunt Anna. Ah, so it is, poor thing! she 's been taken worse this last day or two, and has asked them to send for me. That dropsy is carrying her off at last, I dare say. Poor thing! it will be a happy release. I must go, my dear — she 's your father 's last sister — though I am

sorry to leave you. However, perhaps I shall not have to stay more than a night or two."

Janet looked distressed as she said, "Yes, you must go, mother. But I don't know what I shall do without you. I think I shall run in to Mrs. Pettifer, and ask her to come and stay with me while you 're away. I 'm sure she will."

At twelve o'clock, Janet, having seen her mother in the coach that was to carry her to Thurston, called, on her way back, at Mrs. Pettifer's, but found, to her great disappointment, that her old friend was gone out for the day. So she wrote on a leaf of her pocket-book an urgent request that Mrs. Pettifer would come and stay with her while her mother was away; and, desiring the servant-girl to give it to her mistress as soon as she came home, walked on to the Vicarage to sit with Mrs. Crewe, thinking to relieve in this way the feeling of desolateness and undefined fear that was taking possession of her on being left alone for the first time since that great crisis in her life. And Mrs. Crewe, too, was not at home!

Janet, with a sense of discouragement for which she rebuked herself as childish, walked sadly home again; and when she entered the vacant dining-room, she could not help bursting into tears. It is such vague undefinable states of susceptibility as this — states of excitement or depression, half mental, half physical — that determine many a tragedy in women's lives. Janet could scarcely eat anything at her solitary dinner: she tried to fix her attention on a book in vain; she walked about the garden, and felt the very sunshine melancholy.

Between four and five o'clock, old Mr. Pittman called, and joined her in the garden, where she had been sitting for some time under one of the great apple-trees, thinking how Robert, in his best moods, used to take little Mamsey to look at the cucumbers, or to see the Alderney cow with its calf in the paddock. The tears and sobs had come again at these thoughts; and when Mr. Pittman approached her, she was feeling languid and exhausted. But the old gentleman's sight and sensibility were obtuse, and, to Janet's satisfaction, he showed no consciousness that she was in grief.

"I have a task to impose upon you, Mrs. Dempster," he said,

with a certain toothless pomposity habitual to him: "I want you to look over those letters again in Dempster's bureau, and see if you can find one from Poole about the mortgage on those houses at Dingley. It will be worth twenty pounds, if you can find it; and I don't know where it can be, if it is n't among those letters in the bureau. I 've looked everywhere at the office for it. I 'm going home now, but I 'll call again to-morrow, if you 'll be good enough to look in the mean time."

Janet said she would look directly, and turned with Mr. Pittman into the house. But the search would take her some time, so he bade her good-by, and she went at once to a bureau which stood in a small back-room, where Dempster used sometimes to write letters and receive people who came on business out of office hours. She had looked through the contents of the bureau more than once; but to-day, on removing the last bundle of letters from one of the compartments, she saw what she had never seen before, a small nick in the wood, made in the shape of a thumb-nail, evidently intended as a means of pushing aside the movable back of the compartment. In her examination hitherto she had not found such a letter as Mr. Pittman had described — perhaps there might be more letters behind this slide. She pushed it back at once, and saw — no letters, but a small spirit-decanter, half full of pale brandy, Dempster's habitual drink.

An impetuous desire shook Janet through all her members, it seemed to master her with the inevitable force of strong fumes that flood our senses before we are aware. Her hand was on the decanter; pale and excited, she was lifting it out of its niche, when, with a start and a shudder, she dashed it to the ground, and the room was filled with the odor of the spirit. Without staying to shut up the bureau, she rushed out of the room, snatched up her bonnet and mantle which lay in the dining-room, and hurried out of the house.

Where should she go? In what place would this demon that had re-entered her be scared back again? She walked rapidly along the street in the direction of the church. She was soon at the gate of the churchyard; she passed through it, and made her way across the graves to a spot she knew —

a spot where the turf had been stirred not long before, where a tomb was to be erected soon. It was very near the church wall, on the side which now lay in deep shadow, quite shut out from the rays of the westering sun by a projecting buttress.

Janet sat down on the ground. It was a sombre spot. A thick hedge, surmounted by elm-trees, was in front of her; a projecting buttress on each side. But she wanted to shut out even these objects. Her thick crape veil was down; but she closed her eyes behind it, and pressed her hands upon them. She wanted to summon up the vision of the past; she wanted to lash the demon out of her soul with the stinging memories of the bygone misery; she wanted to renew the old horror and the old anguish, that she might throw herself with the more desperate clinging energy at the foot of the cross, where the Divine Sufferer would impart divine strength. She tried to recall those first bitter moments of shame, which were like the shuddering discovery of the leper that the dire taint is upon him; the deeper and deeper lapse; the on-coming of settled despair; the awful moments by the bedside of her self-maddened husband. And then she tried to live through, with a remembrance made more vivid by that contrast, the blessed hours of hope and joy and peace that had come to her of late, since her whole soul had been bent towards the attainment of purity and holiness.

But now, when the paroxysm of temptation was past, dread and despondency began to thrust themselves, like cold heavy mists, between her and the heaven to which she wanted to look for light and guidance. The temptation would come again — that rush of desire might overmaster her the next time — she would slip back again into that deep slimy pit from which she had been once rescued, and there might be no deliverance for her more. Her prayers did not help her, for fear predominated over trust; she had no confidence that the aid she sought would be given; the idea of her future fall had grasped her mind too strongly. Alone, in this way, she was powerless. If she could see Mr. Tryan, if she could confess all to him, she might gather hope again. She *must* see him; she must go to him.

Janet rose from the ground, and walked away with a quick resolved step She had been seated there a long while, and the sun had already sunk. It was late for her to walk to Paddiford and go to Mr. Tryan's, where she had never called before; but there was no other way of seeing him that evening, and she could not hesitate about it. She walked towards a footpath through the fields, which would take her to Paddiford without obliging her to go through the town. The way was rather long, but she preferred it, because it left less probability of her meeting acquaintances, and she shrank from having to speak to any one.

The evening red had nearly faded by the time Janet knocked at Mrs. Wagstaff's door. The good woman looked surprised to see her at that hour; but Janet's mourning weeds and the painful agitation of her face quickly brought the second thought, that some urgent trouble had sent her there.

"Mr. Tryan 's just come in," she said. "If you 'll step into the parlor, I 'll go up and tell him you 're here. He seemed very tired and poorly."

At another time Janet would have felt distress at the idea that she was disturbing Mr. Tryan when he required rest; but now her need was too great for that: she could feel nothing but a sense of coming relief, when she heard his step on the stair and saw him enter the room.

He went towards her with a look of anxiety, and said, "I fear something is the matter. I fear you are in trouble."

Then poor Janet poured forth her sad tale of temptation and despondency; and even while she was confessing she felt half her burthen removed. The act of confiding in human sympathy, the consciousness that a fellow-being was listening to her with patient pity, prepared her soul for that stronger leap by which faith grasps the idea of the Divine sympathy. When Mr. Tryan spoke words of consolation and encouragement, she could now believe the message of mercy; the waterfloods that had threatened to overwhelm her rolled back again, and life once more spread its heaven-covered space before her. She had been unable to pray alone; but now his prayer bore her own soul along with it, as the broad tongue of flame car-

ries upwards in its vigorous leap the little flickering fire that could hardly keep alight by itself.

But Mr. Tryan was anxious that Janet should not linger out at this late hour. When he saw that she was calmed, he said, "I will walk home with you now; we can talk on the way." But Janet's mind was now sufficiently at liberty for her to notice the signs of feverish weariness in his appearance, and she would not hear of causing him any further fatigue.

"No, no," she said, earnestly, "you will pain me very much — indeed you will, by going out again to-night on my account. There is no real reason why I should not go alone." And when he persisted, fearing that for her to be seen out so late alone might excite remark, she said imploringly, with a half sob in her voice, "What should I — what would others like me do, if you went from us? *Why* will you not think more of that, and take care of yourself?"

He had often had that appeal made to him before, but to-night — from Janet's lips — it seemed to have a new force for him, and he gave way. At first, indeed, he only did so on condition that she would let Mrs. Wagstaff go with her; but Janet had determined to walk home alone. She preferred solitude; she wished not to have her present feelings distracted by any conversation.

So she went out into the dewy starlight; and as Mr. Tryan turned away from her, he felt a stronger wish than ever that his fragile life might last out for him to see Janet's restoration thoroughly established — to see her no longer fleeing, struggling, clinging up the steep sides of a precipice whence she might be any moment hurled back into the depths of despair, but walking firmly on the level ground of habit. He inwardly resolved that nothing but a peremptory duty should ever take him from Milby — that he would not cease to watch over her until life forsook him.

Janet walked on quickly till she turned into the fields; then she slackened her pace a little, enjoying the sense of solitude which a few hours before had been intolerable to her. The Divine Presence did not now seem far off, where she had not wings to reach it; prayer itself seemed superfluous in

those moments of calm trust. The temptation which had so lately made her shudder before the possibilities of the future, was now a source of confidence; for had she not been delivered from it? Had not rescue come in the extremity of danger? Yes; Infinite Love was caring for her. She felt like a little child whose hand is firmly grasped by its father, as its frail limbs make their way over the rough ground; if it should stumble, the father will not let it go.

That walk in the dewy starlight remained forever in Janet's memory as one of those baptismal epochs, when the soul, dipped in the sacred waters of joy and peace, rises from them with new energies, with more unalterable longings.

When she reached home she found Mrs. Pettifer there, anxious for her return. After thanking her for coming, Janet only said, "I have been to Mr. Tryan's; I wanted to speak to him;" and then remembering how she had left the bureau and papers, she went into the back-room, where, apparently, no one had been since she quitted it; for there lay the fragments of glass, and the room was still full of the hateful odor. How feeble and miserable the temptation seemed to her at this moment! She rang for Kitty to come and pick up the fragments and rub the floor, while she herself replaced the papers and locked up the bureau.

The next morning, when seated at breakfast with Mrs. Pettifer, Janet said —

"What a dreary unhealthy-looking place that is where Mr. Tryan lives! I 'm sure it must be very bad for him to live there. Do you know, all this morning, since I 've been awake, I 've been turning over a little plan in my mind. I think it a charming one — all the more, because *you* are concerned in it."

"Why, what can that be?"

"You know that house on the Redhill road they call Holly Mount; it is shut up now. That is Robert's house; at least, it is mine now, and it stands on one of the healthiest spots about here. Now, I 've been settling in my own mind, that if a dear good woman of my acquaintance, who knows how to make a home as comfortable and cosy as a bird's-nest, were to take up her abode there, and have Mr. Tryan as a lodger, she

would be doing one of the most useful deeds in all her useful life."

"You've such a way of wrapping up things in pretty words. You must speak plainer."

"In plain words, then, I should like to settle you at Holly Mount. You would not have to pay any more rent than where you are, and it would be twenty times pleasanter for you than living up that passage where you see nothing but a brick wall. And then, as it is not far from Paddiford, I think Mr. Tryan might be persuaded to lodge with you, instead of in that musty house, among dead cabbages and smoky cottages. I know you would like to have him live with you, and you would be such a mother to him."

"To be sure I should like it; it would be the finest thing in the world for me. But there'll be furniture wanted. My little bit of furniture won't fill that house."

"Oh, I can put some in out of this house; it is too full; and we can buy the rest. They tell me I'm to have more money than I shall know what to do with."

"I'm almost afraid," said Mrs. Pettifer, doubtfully, "Mr. Tryan will hardly be persuaded. He's been talked to so much about leaving that place; and he always said he must stay there — he must be among the people, and there was no other place for him in Paddiford. It cuts me to the heart to see him getting thinner and thinner, and I've noticed him quite short o' breath sometimes. Mrs. Linnet will have it, Mrs. Wagstaff half poisons him with bad cooking. I don't know about that, but he can't have many comforts. I expect he'll break down all of a sudden some day, and never be able to preach any more."

"Well, I shall try my skill with him by-and-by. I shall be very cunning, and say nothing to him till all is ready. You and I and mother, when she comes home, will set to work directly and get the house in order, and then we'll get you snugly settled in it. I shall see Mr. Pittman to-day, and I will tell him what I mean to do. I shall say I wish to have you for a tenant. Everybody knows I'm very fond of that naughty person, Mrs. Pettifer; so it will seem the most

natural thing in the world. And then I shall by-and-by point out to Mr. Tryan that he will be doing you a service as well as himself by taking up his abode with you. I think I can prevail upon him; for last night, when he was quite bent on coming out into the night air, I persuaded him to give it up."

"Well, I only hope you may, my dear. I don't desire anything better than to do something towards prolonging Mr. Tryan's life, for I've sad fears about him."

"Don't speak of them — I can't bear to think of them. We will only think about getting the house ready. We shall be as busy as bees. How we shall want mother's clever fingers! I know the room up-stairs that will just do for Mr. Tryan's study. There shall be no seats in it except a very easy chair and a very easy sofa, so that he shall be obliged to rest himself when he comes home."

CHAPTER XXVI.

That was the last terrible crisis of temptation Janet had to pass through. The good-will of her neighbors, the helpful sympathy of the friends who shared her religious feelings, the occupations suggested to her by Mr. Tryan, concurred, with her strong spontaneous impulses towards works of love and mercy, to fill up her days with quiet social intercourse and charitable exertion. Besides, her constitution, naturally healthy and strong, was every week tending, with the gathering force of habit, to recover its equipoise, and set her free from those physical solicitations which the smallest habitual vice always leaves behind it. The prisoner feels where the iron has galled him, long after his fetters have been loosed.

There were always neighborly visits to be paid and received; and as the months wore on, increasing familiarity with Janet's present self began to efface, even from minds as rigid as Mrs.

Phipps's, the unpleasant impressions that had been left by recent years. Janet was recovering the popularity which her beauty and sweetness of nature had won for her when she was a girl; and popularity, as every one knows, is the most complex and self-multiplying of echoes. Even anti-Tryanite prejudice could not resist the fact that Janet Dempster was a changed woman — changed as the dusty, bruised, and sun-withered plant is changed when the soft rains of heaven have fallen on it — and that this change was due to Mr. Tryan's influence. The last lingering sneers against the Evangelical curate began to die out; and though much of the feeling that had prompted them remained behind, there was an intimidating consciousness that the expression of such feeling would not be effective — jokes of that sort had ceased to tickle the Milby mind. Even Mr. Budd and Mr. Tomlinson, when they saw Mr. Tryan passing pale and worn along the street, had a secret sense that this man was somehow not that very natural and comprehensible thing, a humbug — that, in fact, it was impossible to explain him from the stomach-and-pocket point of view. Twist and stretch their theory as they might, it would not fit Mr. Tryan; and so, with that remarkable resemblance as to mental processes which may frequently be observed to exist between plain men and philosophers, they concluded that the less they said about him the better.

Among all Janet's neighborly pleasures, there was nothing she liked better than to take an early tea at the White House, and to stroll with Mr. Jerome round the old-fashioned garden and orchard. There was endless matter for talk between her and the good old man, for Janet had that genuine delight in human fellowship which gives an interest to all personal details that come warm from truthful lips; and, besides, they had a common interest in good-natured plans for helping their poorer neighbors. One great object of Mr. Jerome's charities was, as he often said, "to keep industrious men an' women off the parish. I'd rether give ten shillin' an' help a man to stan' on his own legs, nor pay half-a-crown to buy him a parish crutch; it's the ruination on him if he once goes to the parish. I've see'd many a time, if you help a man wi' a present in a

neeborly way, it sweetens his blood — he thinks it kind on you; but the parish shillins turn it sour — he niver thinks 'em enough." In illustration of this opinion Mr. Jerome had a large store of details about such persons as Jim Hardy, the coal-carrier, "as lost his hoss," and Sally Butts, "as hed to sell her mangle, though she was as decent a woman as need to be;" to the hearing of which details Janet seriously inclined; and you would hardly desire to see a prettier picture than the kind-faced, white-haired old man telling these fragments of his simple experience as he walked, with shoulders slightly bent, among the moss-roses and espalier apple-trees, while Janet in her widow's cap, her dark eyes bright with interest, went listening by his side, and little Lizzie, with her nankin bonnet hanging down her back, toddled on before them. Mrs. Jerome usually declined these lingering strolls, and often observed, "I niver see the like to Mr. Jerome when he 's got Mrs. Dempster to talk to; it sinnifies nothin' to him whether we 've tea at four or at five o'clock; he 'd go on till six, if you 'd let him alone — he 's like off his head." However, Mrs. Jerome herself could not deny that Janet was a very pretty-spoken woman: "She al'ys says, she niver gets sich pikelets as mine nowhere; I know that very well — other folks buy 'em at shops — thick, unwholesome things, you might as well eat a sponge."

The sight of little Lizzie often stirred in Janet's mind a sense of the childlessness which had made a fatal blank in her life. She had fleeting thoughts that perhaps among her husband's distant relatives there might be some children whom she could help to bring up, some little girl whom she might adopt; and she promised herself one day or other to hunt out a second cousin of his — a married woman, of whom he had lost sight for many years.

But at present her hands and heart were too full for her to carry out that scheme. To her great disappointment, her project of settling Mrs. Pettifer at Holly Mount had been delayed by the discovery that some repairs were necessary in order to make the house habitable, and it was not till September had set in that she had the satisfaction of seeing her old friend

comfortably installed, and the rooms destined for Mr. Tryan looking pretty and cosy to her heart's content. She had taken several of his chief friends into her confidence, and they were warmly wishing success to her plan for inducing him to quit poor Mrs. Wagstaff's dingy house and dubious cookery. That he should consent to some such change was becoming more and more a matter of anxiety to his hearers; for though no more decided symptoms were yet observable in him than increasing emaciation, a dry hacking cough, and an occasional shortness of breath, it was felt that the fulfilment of Mr. Pratt's prediction could not long be deferred, and that this obstinate persistence in labor and self-disregard must soon be peremptorily cut short by a total failure of strength. Any hopes that the influence of Mr. Tryan's father and sister would prevail on him to change his mode of life — that they would perhaps come to live with him, or that his sister at least might come to see him, and that the arguments which had failed from other lips might be more persuasive from hers — were now quite dissipated. His father had lately had an attack of paralysis, and could not spare his only daughter's tendance. On Mr. Tryan's return from a visit to his father, Miss Linnet was very anxious to know whether his sister had not urged him to try change of air. From his answers she gathered that Miss Tryan wished him to give up his curacy and travel, or at least go to the south Devonshire coast.

"And why will you not do so?" Miss Linnet said; "you might come back to us well and strong, and have many years of usefulness before you."

"No," he answered quietly, "I think people attach more importance to such measures than is warranted. I don't see any good end that is to be served by going to die at Nice, instead of dying amongst one's friends and one's work. I cannot leave Milby — at least I will not leave it voluntarily."

But though he remained immovable on this point, he had been compelled to give up his afternoon service on the Sunday, and to accept Mr. Parry's offer of aid in the evening service, as well as to curtail his week-day labors; and he had even written to Mr. Prendergast to request that he would appoint

another curate to the Paddiford district, on the understanding that the new curate should receive the salary, but that Mr. Tryan should co-operate with him as long as he was able. The hopefulness which is an almost constant attendant on consumption, had not the effect of deceiving him as to the nature of his malady, or of making him look forward to ultimate recovery. He believed himself to be consumptive, and he had not yet felt any desire to escape the early death which he had for some time contemplated as probable. Even diseased hopes will take their direction from the strong habitual bias of the mind, and to Mr. Tryan death had for years seemed nothing else than the laying down of a burthen, under which he sometimes felt himself fainting. He was only sanguine about his powers of work: he flattered himself that what he was unable to do one week he should be equal to the next, and he would not admit that in desisting from any part of his labor, he was renouncing it permanently. He had lately delighted Mr. Jerome by accepting his long-proffered loan of the "little chacenut horse;" and he found so much benefit from substituting constant riding exercise for walking, that he began to think he should soon be able to resume some of the work he had dropped.

That was a happy afternoon for Janet, when, after exerting herself busily for a week with her mother and Mrs. Pettifer, she saw Holly Mount looking orderly and comfortable from attic to cellar. It was an old red brick house, with two gables in front, and two clipped holly-trees flanking the garden-gate; a simple, homely-looking place, that quiet people might easily get fond of; and now it was scoured and polished and carpeted and furnished so as to look really snug within. When there was nothing more to be done, Janet delighted herself with contemplating Mr. Tryan's study, first sitting down in the easy-chair, and then lying for a moment on the sofa, that she might have a keener sense of the repose he would get from those well-stuffed articles of furniture, which she had gone to Rotherby on purpose to choose.

"Now, mother," she said, when she had finished her survey, "you have done your work as well as any fairy-mother or god-

mother that ever turned a pumpkin into a coach and horses. You stay and have tea cosily with Mrs. Pettifer while I go to Mrs. Linnet's. I want to tell Mary and Rebecca the good news, that I 've got the exciseman to promise that he will take Mrs. Wagstaff's lodgings when Mr. Tryan leaves. They 'll be so pleased to hear it, because they thought he would make her poverty an objection to his leaving her."

"But, my dear child," said Mrs. Raynor, whose face, always calm, was now a happy one, "have a cup of tea with us first. You 'll perhaps miss Mrs. Linnet's tea-time."

"No, I feel too excited to take tea yet. I 'm like a child with a new baby-house. Walking in the air will do me good."

So she set out. Holly Mount was about a mile from that outskirt of Paddiford Common where Mrs. Linnet's house stood nestled among its laburnums, lilacs, and syringas. Janet's way thither lay for a little while along the highroad, and then led her into a deep-rutted lane, which wound through a flat tract of meadow and pasture, while in front lay smoky Paddiford, and away to the left the mother-town of Milby. There was no line of silvery willows marking the course of a stream — no group of Scotch firs with their trunks reddening in the level sunbeams — nothing to break the flowerless monotony of grass and hedgerow but an occasional oak or elm, and a few cows sprinkled here and there. A very commonplace scene, indeed. But what scene was ever commonplace in the descending sunlight, when color has awakened from its noonday sleep, and the long shadows awe us like a disclosed presence? Above all, what scene is commonplace to the eye that is filled with serene gladness, and brightens all things with its own joy?

And Janet just now was very happy. As she walked along the rough lane with a buoyant step, a half smile of innocent, kindly triumph played about her mouth. She was delighting beforehand in the anticipated success of her persuasive power, and for the time her painful anxiety about Mr. Tryan's health was thrown into abeyance. But she had not gone far along the lane before she heard the sound of a horse advancing at a walking pace behind her. Without looking back, she turned

aside to make way for it between the ruts, and did not notice that for a moment it had stopped, and had then come on with a slightly quickened pace. In less than a minute she heard a well-known voice say, "Mrs. Dempster;" and, turning, saw Mr. Tryan close to her, holding his horse by the bridle. It seemed very natural to her that he should be there. Her mind was so full of his presence at that moment, that the actual sight of him was only like a more vivid thought, and she behaved, as we are apt to do when feeling obliges us to be genuine, with a total forgetfulness of polite forms. She only looked at him with a slight deepening of the smile that was already on her face. He said gently, "Take my arm;" and they walked on a little way in silence.

It was he who broke it. "You are going to Paddiford, I suppose?"

The question recalled Janet to the consciousness that this was an unexpected opportunity for beginning her work of persuasion, and that she was stupidly neglecting it.

"Yes," she said, "I was going to Mrs. Linnet's. I knew Miss Linnet would like to hear that our friend Mrs. Pettifer is quite settled now in her new house. She is as fond of Mrs. Pettifer as I am — almost; I won't admit that any one loves her *quite* as well, for no one else has such good reason as I have. But now the dear woman wants a lodger, for you know she can't afford to live in so large a house by herself. But I knew when I persuaded her to go there that she would be sure to get one — she 's such a comfortable creature to live with; and I did n't like her to spend all the rest of her days up that dull passage, being at every one's beck and call who wanted to make use of her."

"Yes," said Mr. Tryan, "I quite understand your feeling; I don't wonder at your strong regard for her."

"Well, but now I want her other friends to second me. There she is, with three rooms to let, ready furnished, everything in order; and I know some one, who thinks as well of her as I do, and who would be doing good all round — to every one that knows him, as well as to Mrs. Pettifer, if he would go to live with her. He would leave some uncom-

fortable lodgings, which another person is already coveting and would take immediately; and he would go to breathe pure air at Holly Mount, and gladden Mrs. Pettifer's heart by letting her wait on him; and comfort all his friends, who are quite miserable about him."

Mr. Tryan saw it all in a moment — he saw that it had all been done for his sake. He could not be sorry; he could not say no; he could not resist the sense that life had a new sweetness for him, and that he should like it to be prolonged a little — only a little, for the sake of feeling a stronger security about Janet. When she had finished speaking, she looked at him with a doubtful, inquiring glance. He was not looking at her; his eyes were cast downwards; but the expression of his face encouraged her, and she said, in a half-playful tone of entreaty —

"You *will* go and live with her? I know you will. You will come back with me now and see the house."

He looked at her then, and smiled. There is an unspeakable blending of sadness and sweetness in the smile of a face sharpened and paled by slow consumption. That smile of Mr. Tryan's pierced poor Janet's heart: she felt in it at once the assurance of grateful affection and the prophecy of coming death. Her tears rose; they turned round without speaking, and went back again along the lane.

CHAPTER XXVII.

In less than a week Mr. Tryan was settled at Holly Mount, and there was not one of his many attached hearers who did not sincerely rejoice at the event.

The autumn that year was bright and warm, and at the beginning of October, Mr. Walsh, the new curate, came. The mild weather, the relaxation from excessive work, and

perhaps another benignant influence, had for a few weeks a visibly favorable effect on Mr. Tryan. At least he began to feel new hopes, which sometimes took the guise of new strength. He thought of the cases in which consumptive patients remain nearly stationary for years, without suffering so as to make their life burthensome to themselves or to others; and he began to struggle with a longing that it might be so with him. He struggled with it, because he felt it to be an indication that earthly affection was beginning to have too strong a hold on him, and he prayed earnestly for more perfect submission, and for a more absorbing delight in the Divine Presence as the chief good. He was conscious that he did not wish for prolonged life solely that he might reclaim the wanderers and sustain the feeble: he was conscious of a new yearning for those pure human joys which he had voluntarily and determinedly banished from his life — for a draught of that deep affection from which he had been cut off by a dark chasm of remorse. For now, that affection was within his reach; he saw it there, like a palm-shadowed well in the desert; he *could* not desire to die in sight of it.

And so the autumn rolled gently by in its "calm decay." Until November, Mr. Tryan continued to preach occasionally, to ride about visiting his flock, and to look in at his schools; but his growing satisfaction in Mr. Walsh as his successor saved him from too eager exertion and from worrying anxieties. Janet was with him a great deal now, for she saw that he liked her to read to him in the lengthening evenings, and it became the rule for her and her mother to have tea at Holly Mount, where, with Mrs. Pettifer, and sometimes another friend or two, they brought Mr. Tryan the unaccustomed enjoyment of companionship by his own fireside.

Janet did not share his new hopes, for she was not only in the habit of hearing Mr. Pratt's opinion that Mr. Tryan could hardly stand out through the winter, but she also knew that it was shared by Dr. Madeley of Rotherby, whom, at her request, he had consented to call in. It was not necessary or desirable to tell Mr. Tryan what was revealed by the stethoscope, but Janet knew the worst.

She felt no rebellion under this prospect of bereavement, but rather a quiet submissive sorrow. Gratitude that his influence and guidance had been given her, even if only for a little while — gratitude that she was permitted to be with him, to take a deeper and deeper impress from daily communion with him, to be something to him in these last months of his life, was so strong in her that it almost silenced regret. Janet had lived through the great tragedy of woman's life. Her keenest personal emotions had been poured forth in her early love — her wounded affection with its years of anguish — her agony of unavailing pity over that deathbed seven months ago. The thought of Mr. Tryan was associated for her with repose from that conflict of emotion, with trust in the unchangeable, with the influx of a power to subdue self. To have been assured of his sympathy, his teaching, his help, all through her life, would have been to her like a heaven already begun — a deliverance from fear and danger; but the time was not yet come for her to be conscious that the hold he had on her heart was any other than that of the heaven-sent friend who had come to her like the angel in the prison, and loosed her bonds, and led her by the hand till she could look back on the dreadful doors that had once closed her in.

Before November was over Mr. Tryan had ceased to go out. A new crisis had come on: the cough had changed its character, and the worst symptoms developed themselves so rapidly that Mr. Pratt began to think the end would arrive sooner than he had expected. Janet became a constant attendant on him now, and no one could feel that she was performing anything but a sacred office. She made Holly Mount her home, and, with her mother and Mrs. Pettifer to help her, she filled the painful days and nights with every soothing influence that care and tenderness could devise. There were many visitors to the sick-room, led thither by venerating affection; and there could hardly be one who did not retain in after-years a vivid remembrance of the scene there — of the pale wasted form in the easy-chair (for he sat up to the last), of the gray eyes so full even yet of inquiring kindness, as the thin, almost transparent hand was held out to give the pressure of wel-

come; and of the sweet woman, too, whose dark watchful eyes detected every want, and who supplied the want with a ready hand.

There were others who would have had the heart and the skill to fill this place by Mr. Tryan's side, and who would have accepted it as an honor; but they could not help feeling that God had given it to Janet by a train of events which were too impressive not to shame all jealousies into silence.

That sad history which most of us know too well, lasted more than three months. He was too feeble and suffering for the last few weeks to see any visitors, but he still sat up through the day. The strange hallucinations of the disease which had seemed to take a more decided hold on him just at the fatal crisis, and had made him think he was perhaps getting better at the very time when death had begun to hurry on with more rapid movement, had now given way, and left him calmly conscious of the reality. One afternoon near the end of February, Janet was moving gently about the room, in the fire-lit dusk, arranging some things that would be wanted in the night. There was no one else in the room, and his eyes followed her as she moved with the firm grace natural to her, while the bright fire every now and then lit up her face, and gave an unusual glow to its dark beauty. Even to follow her in this way with his eyes was an exertion that gave a painful tension to his face; while *she* looked like an image of life and strength.

"Janet," he said presently, in his faint voice — he always called her Janet now. In a moment she was close to him, bending over him. He opened his hand as he looked up at her, and she placed hers within it.

"Janet," he said again, "you will have a long while to live after I am gone."

A sudden pang of fear shot through her. She thought he felt himself dying, and she sank on her knees at his feet, holding his hand, while she looked up at him, almost breathless.

"But you will not feel the need of me as you have done. . . . You have a sure trust in God . . . I shall not look for you in vain at the last."

"No . . . no . . . I shall be there . . . God will not forsake me."

She could hardly utter the words, though she was not weeping. She was waiting with trembling eagerness for anything else he might have to say.

"Let us kiss each other before we part."

She lifted up her face to his, and the full life-breathing lips met the wasted dying ones in a sacred kiss of promise.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

It soon came — the blessed day of deliverance, the sad day of bereavement; and in the second week of March they carried him to the grave. He was buried as he had desired: there was no hearse, no mourning-coach; his coffin was borne by twelve of his humble hearers, who relieved each other by turns. But he was followed by a long procession of mourning friends, women as well as men.

Slowly, amid deep silence, the dark stream passed along Orchard Street, where eighteen months before the Evangelical curate had been saluted with hootings and hisses. Mr. Jerome and Mr. Landor were the eldest pall-bearers; and behind the coffin, led by Mr. Tryan's cousin, walked Janet, in quiet submissive sorrow. She could not feel that he was quite gone from her; the unseen world lay so very near her — it held all that had ever stirred the depths of anguish and joy within her.

It was a cloudy morning, and had been raining when they left Holly Mount; but as they walked, the sun broke out, and the clouds were rolling off in large masses when they entered the churchyard, and Mr. Walsh's voice was heard saying, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." The faces were not hard at this funeral; the burial-service was not a hollow form. Every heart there was filled with the memory of a man who, through a self-sacrificing life and in a painful death, had been

sustained by the faith which fills that form with breath and substance.

When Janet left the grave, she did not return to Holly Mount; she went to her home in Orchard Street, where her mother was waiting to receive her. She said quite calmly, "Let us walk round the garden, mother." And they walked round in silence, with their hands clasped together, looking at the golden crocuses bright in the spring sunshine. Janet felt a deep stillness within. She thirsted for no pleasure; she craved no worldly good. She saw the years to come stretch before her like an autumn afternoon, filled with resigned memory. Life to her could never more have any eagerness; it was a solemn service of gratitude and patient effort. She walked in the presence of unseen witnesses — of the Divine love that had rescued her, of the human love that waited for its eternal repose until it had seen her endure to the end.

Janet is living still. Her black hair is gray, and her step is no longer buoyant; but the sweetness of her smile remains, the love is not gone from her eyes; and strangers sometimes ask, Who is that noble-looking elderly woman that walks about holding a little boy by the hand? The little boy is the son of Janet's adopted daughter, and Janet in her old age has children about her knees, and loving young arms round her neck.

There is a simple gravestone in Milby Churchyard, telling that in this spot lie the remains of Edgar Tryan, for two years officiating curate at the Paddiford Chapel-of-Ease, in this parish. It is a meagre memorial, and tells you simply that the man who lies there took upon him, faithfully or unfaithfully, the office of guide and instructor to his fellow-men.

But there is another memorial of Edgar Tryan, which bears a fuller record: it is Janet Dempster, rescued from self-despair, strengthened with divine hopes, and now looking back on years of purity and helpful labor. The man who has left such a memorial behind him, must have been one whose heart beat with true compassion, and whose lips were moved by fervent faith.

A LIFE OF GEORGE ELIOT.

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Mary Ann Evans was born at Arbury Farm, parish of Chilvers Colton, Warwickshire, England, on November 22, 1819. Her father, Robert Evans, was a farmer, surveyor, and land agent, a man of judgment and wide knowledge in his own calling, and of a marked reputation for probity and honesty of character. "He raised himself," says his daughter, "from being an artisan to be a man whose extensive knowledge in very varied practical departments made his services valued through several counties. He had large knowledge of building, of mines, of plantations, of various branches of valuation and measurement — of all that is essential to the management of large estates. He was held by those competent to judge as unique among land-agents for his manifold knowledge and experience." His character is very well represented in Adam Bede and Caleb Garth, for he was quiet, possessed of great strength, and had a love for reading. His wife was shrewd and sharp, a diligent housewife, and given to sarcastic speech. There was much of the Mrs. Poyser in her nature, and she was as nervously anxious as she was hard-working; but she has been described as "a very serious, earnest-minded woman, anxiously concerned for the moral and religious training of her children."

When Mary Ann was four months old the family moved to Griff House, on the same estate as Arbury Farm. The mother was ailing, and the little girl became the companion of her brother Isaac, and with him she spent much of her time out of doors. So much did she love play, that she was slow in

learning to read, although she was sent to a dame school as early as was possible. At the age of five she went to Miss Lathom's school at Attleborough, where she remained for three or four years. A not unhappy life she passed at this school, among girls much older than herself, but with the privilege of being at home on the Saturdays. Shy and sensitive, she had a great dread of the darkness, and suffered much therefrom; and yet she had an earnest conviction that she was destined to be somebody in the world. There was a strong need in her character for love, and for some one to lean on; and in a boarding-school this want could not be well supplied.

This life was continued, however, for at the age of eight years she was sent to Miss Wallington's school at Nuneaton, with her sister, who was five years older. Here her school work became far more attractive, for she made such advance in her studies as to become thoroughly interested in their pursuit. The opportunity for reading was increased, and that became a passion. Her love for books began when a mere child, but now she was absorbed in the pages of Scott, Lamb, and Defoe. At this time, from her tenth to her thirteenth year she had an eager love of knowledge, quickly possessed herself of her lessons, and was greatly absorbed in the subject of religion. When she was thirteen she went to the school of the Misses Franklin at Coventry, where she remained for three years. Though she had shown no precocity whatever as a child, yet she had slowly grown to be an enthusiastic student, of a quick mind, and with a great capacity for absorbing knowledge. In Coventry her ability at once made itself manifest, and she was soon at the head of the school. In English composition, music, and the modern languages she showed superior powers. To the Misses Franklin she always felt that she was greatly indebted for their friendship and their sympathetic help in her studies. They were the daughters of a Baptist clergyman, and devoutly interested in their own form of faith. With her great need of sympathy and companionship, Mary Ann was drawn to their beliefs and conformed for a time to their interpretation of religion. She

did not forsake the Church of England, to which her father was strongly attached; but she became thoroughly evangelical in her tendencies.

She left school in 1835, and in 1836 her mother died. She had seen little of her mother since she was a mere child, but she was warmly attached to her, and the loss was keenly felt. When she was eighteen her sister Christina was married, and the care of the house fell upon Mary Ann. With a firm sense of duty she gave herself to this employment, performing the household tasks faithfully, though with a constant regret that she could not give more time to her books. Much of her time at this period, as well as before and after, until she went to live in London, was spent in visiting the poor. She organized clothing-clubs, and in many ways showed her love of the good work of charity. Indeed, she won an enviable reputation among her friends for her eager interest in labors of this kind. Her love of books did not grow less, however; and we soon find her taking up the study of German and Italian, and devoting much time to music. Her reading went forward with good purpose; and the books read came to be more and more those of solid worth. In a letter written in 1838 she speaks of a serious fault in her reading, growing out of her eager desire to become acquainted with every book within her reach. "I am generally in the same predicament with books as a glutton with his feast, hurrying through one course that I may be in time for the next, and so not relishing or digesting either; not a very elegant illustration, but the best my organs of ideality and comparison will furnish just now."

A poem of hers was published in 1840, written the year before, and thoroughly evangelical in tone. She seems to have written other verses at this time, but no others have been brought to light. Soon after she was engaged in preparing a chart of ecclesiastical history, which she proposed to publish; but the publication of one prepared by another hand caused her to give up this undertaking. A visit to London in August, 1838, and a journey into Derbyshire and Staffordshire with her father in June, 1840, varied the monotony of her household cares and her studies.

In March, 1841, the home at Griff was given up, and father and daughter moved to a house on the Foleshill road, about one mile from Coventry. This event was one of great importance in the life of Mary Ann Evans, for it brought her greater opportunities of study, and under excellent masters, and it gave her a circle of cultivated and devoted friends. Her intellectual life at once expanded, and her mind grew deeper and richer. The next month after going to Foleshill she writes of being "made alive to what is certainly a fact, that I am *alone* in the world." In another letter, a month later, she gives another insight into her own character: "I have had to lament that mine is not a hard-working mind — it requires frequent rest." In the same letter she says: "Oh, to be doing some little towards the regeneration of this groaning, travailing creation!" These three sentences explain much in the character of Mary Ann Evans, — her self-distrust, her need for sympathy and love, and her desire to give the tenderest sympathies of her life to the good of others. These self-searchings bring us to that period when her girlhood was ended, and she was led by experiences that tried her soul to what was strongest and most noble in her womanhood.

Among the friends she made in Coventry, soon after going there to live, were Charles Bray and his wife, Charles Hennell, and Miss Sara Hennell. Mr. Bray was a ribbon-manufacturer, and a gentleman of literary tastes, whose house, Rosehill, was a centre for the radical literary and religious thought of that region. Here were welcomed George Combe, James Froude, Emerson, and other persons of a like manner of thinking. A devoted phrenologist, Mr. Bray accepted the philosophic doctrine of necessity, and he became a rationalistic interpreter of the Gospel narratives. He wrote several books, which were welcomed by a circle of readers of like tastes with his own. The brother and sister of Mrs. Bray, Charles and Sara Hennell, were of like ways of thinking. In 1838, Charles Hennell published a book on the origin of Christianity, in which he showed that it grew from already existing conditions, as a natural result of the activity of the human mind. Sara

Hennell has applied the doctrine of evolution to interpreting the origin of religion, in an extensive work.

Under the influence of these persons Mary Ann Evans not only lost her ultra-evangelicalism, but gave up her faith in all supernaturalism. She had been zealously religious throughout her girlhood, and this devoutness was increased because she was enthusiastic and eager to do good. Her mind was naturally inclined to search for the reasons of her beliefs, however, and she was zealous in finding out what can be said on the subject of religion. In after years, when asked what influence had first unsettled her mind in regard to her orthodox beliefs, she replied, "Oh, Walter Scott's." His descriptions of good and noble lives, lived without reference to religious beliefs, had produced this effect on her mind. This want of conformity of religious theory with religious practice seems to have much affected her, and to have been forced upon her attention in several ways. She noted it in the lives of the poor and untruthful, but very religious people, with whom she was brought in contact in her benevolent work; and she noted it in the lives of the good men of whom she read. One of her friends "well remembers her speaking of Robert Hall's confession that he had been made unhappy for a week by the reading of Miss Edgeworth's Tales, in which useful, good, and pleasant lives are lived with no reference to religious hopes and fears; and her drawing attention to the real greatness of mind and sincerity of faith which this candid confession betokened." The reading of Isaac Taylor's "Ancient Christianity" also seems to have had its influence in the same direction. A mind alert for truth, and eager to know all that is to be known, was likely not to be content with accepting her faith on the statement of others. Once finding that the arguments for Christianity were not so complete as she had supposed, or, at least, that the arguments against it were very strong and not easily answered, she would be inclined to give more weight to the objections to it than they actually deserve.

She had the impatience and inquisitiveness of a young and enthusiastic person, the desire to learn, and the egotism of having gone farther than those about her. In a conversation

at this time she said of the Jews: "To think that they were deluded into expectations of a temporal deliverer, and then punished because they could n't understand that it was a spiritual deliverer that was intended!" When the person with whom she was in conversation said that we have no claim on God, she at once retorted: "No claim on God! We have the strongest possible claim upon him." Her companion describes her as she appeared during this controversy with a person much older than herself: "There was not only on her part a vehemence of tone, startling in one so quiet, but a crudeness in her objections, an absence of proposed solution of difficulties, which was in strange contrast to the satisfied calm which marked her subsequent treatment of religious differences."

Even before moving to Coventry her reading of Isaac Taylor had had its effect in loosening her hold on her former beliefs, and her mind was prepared for the influence of the Brays and Hennells. This will account for the rapidity with which she now forsook her old faith, and took up the new one of rationalism and philosophic necessity. Another reason for this change was, that she found in her new friends persons who were in intellectual sympathy with her in regard to her love of literature and the best thinking. This affinity of intellectual interests prepared her mind for the acceptance of whatever teachings might come to her from those to whom she gave her confidence. Under this new stimulus, and this complete satisfaction of her desire for friendship and sympathy, her voice and manner changed, and she became quite another person. As in the case of all new converts, she zealously espoused the new faith that had been given her, and she believed that it was far more satisfactory and ennobling than the old one. She wrote with enthusiasm of Charles Hennell's rationalistic interpretation of the origin of Christianity. "The book is full of *wit*, to me," she said. "It gives me that exquisite kind of laughter which comes from the gratification of the reasoning faculties." "I think," she farther says, "the 'Inquiry' furnishes the utmost that can be done towards obtaining a real view of the life and

character of Jesus, by rejecting as little as possible from the Gospels."

The first effect, however, of her change of belief was to leave her in an unsettled and unhappy state of mind. Every effort was made by her old friends to bring her back to her Christian faith, and, among others, a well-read Baptist clergyman was asked to converse with her. After doing so, he said: "That young lady must have had the devil at her elbow to suggest her doubts, for there was not a book that I recommended to her in support of Christian evidences that she had not read." A theological professor, who had studied at Halle and was familiar with German rationalism, next sought to bring her back to the old faith; and his conclusion was, "*She* has gone into the question." If she had given up the faith of her childhood, she was by no means satisfied with any other, and she remained in a hesitating and perplexed state of mind for some time. In September, 1842, her friend wrote: "She now takes up a different position. Her views are not altogether altered, but she says it would be extreme arrogance in so young a person to suppose she had obtained *yet* any just ideas of truth." Two months later the same person again wrote an account of an interview: "She seems more settled in her views than ever, and rests her objections to Christianity on this ground, that Calvinism is Christianity, and this granted, that it is religion based on pure selfishness. She occupied, however, a great part of her time in pleading for works of imagination, maintaining that they perform an office for the mind which nothing else can. On the mention of Shakespeare, she praised him with her characteristic ardor." In the March following, her views had undergone still other changes: "She said she considered Jesus Christ as the embodiment of perfect love, and seemed to be leaning slightly to the doctrines of Carlyle and Emerson, when she remarked that she considered the Bible a revelation in a certain sense, as she considered herself a revelation of the mind of Deity."

At this period she was reading Tholuch's reply to Strauss, the "Life of Dr. Arnold," a biography of Richter and one or more of his books, Margaret Fuller's "Woman in the Nine-

teenth Century," and Emerson's "Essays." The fresh and eager life she found in these books satisfied and filled her mind, and gave her the idea of a religion larger and nobler than that to which she had been accustomed. The frivolity and worldliness of the popular religion about her she contrasted to its disadvantage with that of these persons, who gave themselves with profound and consecrated enthusiasm to the service of man, as well as to plain living and high thinking. Perhaps the first effect of her change in religious faith was to make her a Theist after the manner of Froude, Francis Newman, and Emerson. When she met the latter, in 1848, she wrote, "I have met Emerson — the first *man* I have ever seen." About this time she seems to have turned to Pantheism as a solution of the problem of the universe, and that continued for some years the faith which satisfied her intellect. She did not by any means lose her faith in the deepest things of religion, or her passionate desire to live a truly good and devout life. In a letter to one of her new friends, written in February, 1842, she shows all her old eagerness for being on the side of the truth and doing service for the right. "For my part," she exclaims, "I wish to be among the ranks of that glorious crusade that is seeking to set Truth's Holy Sepulchre free from a usurped domination. We shall then see her resurrection! Meanwhile, although I cannot rank among my principles of action a fear of vengeance eternal, gratitude for predestined salvation, or a revelation of future glories as a reward, I fully participate in the belief that the only heaven here or hereafter is to be found in conformity with the will of the Supreme; a continual aiming at the attainment of the perfect ideal, the true *logos* that dwells in the bosom of the Father."

Her religious doubts did not lessen her desire for doing good, and her mind was full of benevolent purposes. Her friends and servants, and the poor about her, all went to her with their troubles, and she gave them the sympathy they needed. "When any object of charity came under her notice, and power to help was within her reach, she was very prompt in rendering it." She had no desire, as she said, "to save

one's soul by making up coarse flannel for the poor;" but she had the humanitarian spirit in a most active and zealous form. She helped to form an industrial school for girls, then a new thing and not favorably received, and she was very active in the work of carrying on an infant school. She was delighted in the work of the Mechanics' Institute, and when she heard the first temperance lecture given in Coventry, she said of the lecturer, "I felt that he had got hold of a power for good that was of incalculable worth." Among her young friends she inculcated the best lessons which life can afford. On one of them she enforced the importance of being accurate and having the spirit of toleration. "My dear child," she said, "the great lesson of life is tolerance."

So taken up was she with her new faith, and so anxious to assert its worth, during the first year of its acceptance, that she ceased to go to church, and lost all her interest in the religion she had abandoned. Her father was much offended with this action, proposed to give up Foleshill, and to live with his married daughter. He put the house into the hands of an agent, while Mary Ann planned to go to Leamington to teach. After some weeks of uncertainty and distrust, through the intercession of her brother and friends she was induced to resume her habit of attending church, and her father withdrew the house from the hands of the agent. It was not long before she saw that she had been unwise in carrying her zeal too far, and that it was better to conform to the manners of the world in those things which are dear to those we love. The result was, that she went on happily with her duties and her studies, while her father's old age was tenderly cared for and kept sweet. "The first impulse of a young and ingenuous mind," she says in one of the letters written soon after this experience, "is to withhold the slightest sanction from all that contains even a mixture of supposed error. When the soul is just liberated from the wretched giant's bed of dogmas on which it has been racked and stretched ever since it began to think, there is a feeling of exultation and strong hope. We think we shall run well when we have the full use of our limbs and the bracing air of independence. . . . But a year or

two of reflection, and the experience of our own miserable weakness, which will ill afford to part even with the crutch of superstition, must, I think, affect a change. Speculative truth begins to appear but a shadow of individual minds. Agreement between intellects seems unattainable, and we turn to the truth of feeling as the only universal bond of union." In this way she reconciled herself with her father and with church attendance; and the conclusion thus expressed and acted on became a leading principle in her life throughout all the coming years. In the bonds of sympathy and feeling she found the reconciliation of the discords of faith and life.

During the next two years her friendship with the Brays and Hennells strengthened with every month. In May, 1843, they made a trip together to Stratford and Malvern, and in July two weeks were spent at Tenby. During this summer, through the marriage of Charles Hennell with Miss Brabrant, who had undertaken the translation of Strauss's "Life of Jesus," the task of completing this work came into the hands of Mary Ann Evans. She labored on it diligently for two years, little liking the task, and often feeling keenly her disagreement with the positions of Strauss. When the task was completed she rejoiced greatly, for it had been irksome and vexatious. In July, 1844, while the translation was progressing, she went with the Brays to the Cumberland lakes, as well as to Manchester and Liverpool. In June of the next year she spent a few days in London, and in October she took a fortnight's trip to Scotland with the Brays and Miss Hennell.

In June, 1846, a few weeks were spent in London, the Strauss volume being published at that time. In July she went with her father to Dover for a brief period of rest. She went quietly on with her studies, and her letters of this period show more and more the strong intellectual growth of her mind. She writes frequently of the books she is reading, and of the political and literary topics which are uppermost in public attention at the time. In May, 1848, she went with her father for several weeks to St. Leonard's; and then she became aware that his health was seriously failing. She became more devoted to his care, giving many hours of each day

to reading for his diversion. Soon after her return from the trip just mentioned she met with Emerson, and not long before she wrote a review of Froude's "Nemesis of Faith." Not far from this time she began to translate Spinoza's "Tractatus Theologico-Politicus," a work which she completed but never published.

An event now happened which led to a quite different life for Mary Ann Evans, and to the beginning of her literary labors. This was the death of her father, which occurred May 31, 1849. She mourned him sincerely; and the ceasing of the need to care for him made a great change in her thoughts and feelings. The Brays having planned a Continental tour, she now resolved to join them. Starting June 11, they passed through France and Italy, arriving in Geneva July 3. Here she remained for eight months. She enjoyed the scenery and the life about her, and she made a few excellent friends. At first she went to the *pension* known as the Campagne Plongeon, situated in the suburbs, but in a locality commanding some of the finest scenery. The company here did not prove attractive, and she found a home in the city with M. d'Albert Durade, who was an artist of some repute, and in whose family she had a very pleasant and attractive home. He was a man of refinement, musical, sociable, and devoted to his art; his wife was also a person of taste and good feeling. Their home became a real resting-place to Mary Ann Evans, and she won two good friends by her sojourn there. She gave a part of her time to studies in music, physics, mathematics, and other subjects congenial to her mind; but rest was her main object.

In the spring she returned to England by the way of France, accompanied by M. d'Albert Durade, and arrived home March 23. She went at once to her friends in Coventry, and then returned to the old home at Griff. After a few weeks spent with her relatives she became an inmate of Rosehill, and remained there for the next year and a half. She found the climate very trying on her first coming home, and the effects of her rest seemed not to be great; but she slowly recovered a more hopeful tone of body and mind. Her first piece of review

writing was done during the autumn, being an article for the "Westminster Review" on Mackay's "Progress of the Intellect." John Chapman, the editor of that "Review," was at Rosehill in October consulting with her about becoming his assistant in conducting it. A prospectus for a new series was drawn up with her aid during a visit she made to London in January, where she remained until March. In September she returned permanently to London, and became a boarder in Mr. Chapman's family, at No. 142, Strand. During the next five years she was the assistant editor of the "Westminster Review," contributing about a dozen articles to its pages, and writing much for it in the way of reviews of current literature, as well as devoting much time to purely editorial work. The character of the "Review" was at once elevated by her work on it, and a brilliant list of contributors was secured, largely by her efforts. She was brought into contact with some of the ablest men and women of the day, and soon numbered Herbert Spencer, Harriet Martineau, George H. Lewes, W. R. Greg, Carlyle, and others, among her friends.

Her health was not perfectly restored, and she passed many wretched days, suffering greatly from headaches, and she was ever after the victim of bodily debility. She went often to the theatre and to concerts, took an occasional outing at Rosehill or elsewhere, and had a good deal of connection with the literary people of London. The drudgery of the editorial position was not congenial to her, and her health interfered with the prompt discharge of its duties; and yet she faithfully executed all literary labors which she undertook. At one time she writes: "I am bothered to death with article-reading and scrap-work of all sorts; it is clear my poor head will never produce anything under these circumstances; *but I am patient!*"

In October, 1853, she changed her home to Hyde Park Square, where she had more of quiet, and a greater command of her time. At this time she was writing a work on "The Idea of a Future Life," which was never published; and she began a translation of Feuerbach's "Essence of Christianity." In her new lodgings she saw more of her friends than before.

and she writes much about them in her letters. Almost without exception, at this period, as well as throughout her life, she wrote with praise and admiration of her contemporaries. She did not admire Miss Bremer, and wrote some very sharp words about her; but a closer acquaintance gave her a greater appreciation. For Harriet Martineau, on the other hand, she had the warmest regard, and a very high conception of her genius. In October, 1852, she went on a short visit to George Combe and Miss Martineau, and she describes the latter as "charming in her own home." Before this she had written, "She is a *trump* — the only Englishwoman who possesses thoroughly the art of writing." The last statement did not prevent her admiration of Mrs. Gaskell, whose style was a great refreshment to her, from its finish and fulness. Not long after going to London she met "a Mr. Herbert Spencer," who soon became her warm friend, who had frequent conversations with her, and whom she accompanied to musical entertainments and the theatre. In April they went of a Saturday to the opera, and she wrote of him to the Brays: "We have agreed that we are not in love with each other, and that there is no reason why we should not have as much of each other's society as we like. He is a good, delightful creature, and I always feel better for being with him."

With another of her new friends there did come to be more than friendship. In September, very soon after going to London, she was introduced to George Henry Lewes, then well known as an author, and with whose reputation she was probably well acquainted; but this casual meeting did not give her a good impression of him. She described him to a correspondent as "a sort of miniature Mirabeau in appearance." His name occasionally appears in her letters, showing that they were progressing towards an acquaintance. In November he called, and spent two hours talking with her before dinner; and when he was gone she lamented the time which had been wasted. In March she found him, "as always, genial and amusing. He has quite won my liking," she added, "in spite of myself." Describing the April gathering of the "Westminster" writers, in a letter to Mrs. Bray, she said that people

were very good to her. "Mr. Lewes, especially," she continued, "is kind and attentive, and has quite won my regard, after having had a good deal of my vituperation." A few days later she wrote to the same friend: "Poor Lewes is ill, and is ordered not to put pen to paper for a month; so I have something to do for him in addition to my own work, which is rather pressing." Early in July she writes of going abroad; and on the 20th she joined her fortunes with those of Mr. Lewes, and set out for Germany.

It will be seen that she was repelled from Lewes at first, and that his good nature, his geniality, his kindly help and sympathy, won on her until aversion was turned into love. He had the vivacity of a Frenchman, united to the solidity of an Englishman; and he was always lively and happy in temperament. He was also of her own ways of thinking, and they had much in common intellectually. He had been married and had three children; but his wife had deserted him, and his home had been wholly broken up. According to the English laws he could not secure a divorce except by an act of Parliament, which was not to be thought of in his case. Of course, under these circumstances, he could not marry Miss Evans; and she consented to become his wife without the legal process. They could have been legally married on the Continent or in the United States; but they seem to have preferred to make a protest against an exacting and unjust law. Their union must be judged by the results which it produced for them both. Her letters from this time show her great love for Mr. Lewes, her thorough sympathy with him, and the constant satisfaction she found in his companionship. The union was one of happiness and perfect sympathy for them both; and they were as truly married as if a legal ceremony had been performed.

In her youth Mary Ann Evans entertained opinions which made such a marriage possible with her. At that time she thought a union in the bonds of marriage which was not based on a sympathy of minds and hearts, to be dreadful. "How terrible it must be," she said, "to find one's self tied to a being whose limitations you could see, and must know were such as to prevent your ever being understood." A friend of her youth

has said of her opinions at about the age of twenty-five: "She thought the stringency of laws rendering the marriage-tie (at that date) irrevocable, practically worked injuriously; the effect being 'that many wives took far less pains to please their husbands in behavior and appearance, because they knew their own position to be invulnerable.' And at a later time she spoke of marriages on the Continent, where separations did not necessarily involve discredit, as being very frequently far happier." In 1848, in writing to Charles Bray of "Jane Eyre," she says: "All self-sacrifice is good, but one would like it to be in a somewhat nobler cause than that of a diabolical law which chains a man soul and body to a putrefying carcass." From these indications it would seem that she regarded the law forbidding divorces except by an act of Parliament as injurious and diabolical, even before she had met Lewes. Such being her opinion of the law, it was made easier for her to disregard it when the occasion came.

The only question to be raised about their act is that concerning the advisability of an individual disregard of the legal sanctions which are so necessary to the moral health of the community, on the subject of the relations of the sexes. Was their act likely to lead persons of an inadequate moral purpose to follow their example? This is not at all probable, for the whole tenor of their lives was in favor of a perfect devotion to the true marriage ties. On the other hand, their protest was worth something as against laws which were far too exacting to be just. There is not the slightest evidence that she ever in any way regretted the step she had taken; and she did accept cheerfully the obloquy which it cast upon her from the fashionable and fastidious. With her strong moral purpose, however, it is not easy to understand why she did not seek marriage on the Continent, for the sake of escaping whatever evil effect might have followed her conduct. While recognizing the great good which came to her from her union with Mr. Lewes, it is not possible to overlook the failure of her conduct in regard to one of the highest of social relations. In the union of the sexes society finds its highest sanction and purpose; and the keeping that relation pure is absolutely necessary to

its health and development. This was fully seen by Miss Evans; and she seems to have felt, that, on the whole, she could as well serve society by a protest as by conformity. While regretting that circumstances seemed to put her in the company of those who reject all binding moral and social ties, we cannot but remember with the utmost of gratitude that she did find much needed sympathy and encouragement in her union with Mr. Lewes.

Much has been written on this subject, but those who love the woman and her books have come to feel that her heart was in the right, if her conduct was conventionally wrong. Those willing to exercise charity will keenly appreciate the force of her appeal to Mrs. Bray, in a letter written September 4, 1855, more than a year after her union with Lewes. "Light and easily broken ties," she writes, "are what I neither desire theoretically nor could live for practically. Women who are satisfied with such ties do *not* act as I have done. That any unworldly, unsuperstitious person who is sufficiently acquainted with the realities of life can pronounce my relation to Mr. Lewes immoral, I can only understand by remembering how subtile and complex are the influences that mould opinion. But I do remember this: and I indulge in no arrogant and uncharitable thoughts about those who condemn us, even though we might have expected a somewhat different verdict. From the majority of persons, of course, we never looked for anything but condemnation. We are leading no life of self-indulgence, except, indeed, that, being happy in each other, we find everything easy. We are working hard to provide for others better than we provide for ourselves, and to fulfil every responsibility that lies upon us." In 1861 she wrote of the sacrifice she had made of friends in a most cheerful mood, and she stated clearly her claim as a married woman: "It was never a trial to me to have been cut off from what is called the world, and I think that I love none of my fellow-creatures the less for it; still, I must always retain a peculiar regard for those who showed me any kindness in word or deed at that time, when there was the least evidence in my favor. The list of those who did so is a short one, so that I can often and easily recall it. For the last

six years I have ceased to be 'Miss Evans' for any one who has personal relations with me — having held myself under all the responsibilities of a married woman. I wish this to be distinctly understood; and when I tell you that we have a great boy of eighteen at home, who calls me 'mother,' as well as two other boys, almost as tall, who write to me under the same name, you will understand that the point is not one of mere egotism or personal dignity, when I request that any one who has a regard for me will cease to speak of me by my maiden name."

In her letters, in her journal, and elsewhere, George Eliot constantly expressed the great satisfaction she had in her married life, and the perfect love which was given her. She wrote to Madame Bodichon, who had discovered the secret of the authorship of "Adam Bede," of the help her husband had given her in writing it: "When I read aloud my manuscript to my dear, dear husband, he laughed and cried alternately, and then rushed to me to kiss me. He is the prime blessing that has made all the rest possible to me, giving me a response to everything that I have written — a response that I could confide in, as a proof that I have not mistaken my work." Six years later she wrote in her journal: "In each other we are happier than ever. I am more grateful to my dear husband for his perfect love, which helps me in all good and checks me in all evil — more conscious that in him I have the greatest of blessings." Eight years farther on in their married life she wrote to Mrs. William Smith of the death of that lady's husband, and of Mr. Lewes's reading her account of their married life: "He sobbed with something which is a sort of grief better worth having than any trivial gladness, as he read the printed record of your love. He, too, is capable of that supreme, self-merging love." The manuscripts of her books were presented to Mr. Lewes, and each one of them inscribed with the words, "To my dear Husband." The "Spanish Gypsy" bore this expression of her affection: "To my dear — every day dearer — Husband." On the manuscript of "Middlemarch" was this inscription: "To my dear Husband, George Henry Lewes, in this nineteenth year of our blessed union."

Not only did she find her own marriage all that she could desire, but she had a very lofty idea of what marriage should be. She wrote to a friend of that ideal of marriage which she desired young people "to have in their minds as a goal." To a young friend about to be married she wrote: "The possibility of a constantly growing blessedness in marriage is to me the very basis of good in our mortal life; and the believing hope that you and she will experience that blessedness seems to enrich me for the coming years." In all her books, too, her ideal of marriage is of the noblest and purest.

To this expression of George Eliot's affection for her husband ought to be added his testimony of the debt he owed to her. At the beginning of 1859 he recorded in his journal the results of an interview with Herbert Spencer: "Walked along the Thames towards Kew to meet Herbert Spencer, who was to spend the day with us, and we chatted with him on matters personal and philosophical. I owe him a debt of gratitude. My acquaintance with him was the brightest ray in a very dreary, *wasted* period of my life. I had given up all ambition whatever, lived from hand to mouth, and thought the evil of each day sufficient. The stimulus of his intellect, especially during our long walks, roused my energy once more and revived my dormant love of science. His intense theorizing tendency was contagious, and it was only the stimulus of a theory which could then have induced me to work. I owe Spencer another and a deeper debt. It was through him that I learned to know Marian — to know her was to love her — and since then my life has been a new birth. To her I owe all my prosperity and all my happiness. God bless her!"

After deciding to accept the marriage relations without the aid of a clergyman, Lewes and his wife proceeded at once to Weimar, where they spent three months. He had already been engaged for some time on his "Life of Goethe," which he now completed in the midst of the scenes which that great poet had consecrated by his presence. She worked with him, took long walks in his company, and studied every subject in which he was occupied. Her descriptions of Weimar are most interesting, because so full of the finest appreciation of the

men who have given the little German city all its reputation. Early in November they went to Berlin for five months, which were spent in the same affectionate companionship and in the same earnest pursuit of common studies. Here they met Varnhagen, Reymond, Gruppe, Stahr, and other men of genius, who soon became their friends. Though they did not at all admire the newness and pretension of Berlin, their days were spent delightfully in study and conversation. During these German days she nearly completed her translation of Spinoza's "Ethics," and she wrote for the "Westminster Review" an article on Victor Cousin's "Madame de Sablé," and another on Vehse's "Court of Austria." In company with Lewes she read Shakespeare, Goethe, Lessing, Thackeray, Heine, and Schiller.

In March they returned to England, and in May they settled in lodgings at East Sheen; but in September they took rooms at 8 Park Street, Richmond, where they remained for about three years. She at once resumed her labors on the "Westminster," at least the writing the Belles Lettres section for each number. The drudgery of reading articles and correcting proofs did not come to her again; but she wrote much more for the "Review" itself than she had done before. During the next two years she produced papers on the poet Young, the theological teachings of Dr. Cumming, a famous preacher of the day, the works of Rheil, Heine, and German wit, the silly books of lady novelists, and an account of her visit to Weimar. At the same time she wrote almost weekly for the "Leader," of which Lewes was the literary editor.

In after years she was inclined to take little interest in the review writing which she did at this period, and she said to one of her friends that she wrote criticisms because she did not know enough about life to write anything else. This is the judgment of the successful novelist, who had come to feel impatient of that work of earlier years which had not satisfied her literary aspirations; and it is not to be accepted as a final verdict on that work. In fact, her review writing was of an original and striking kind, independent, sympathetic, and suggestive. The opinions she expressed of

her contemporaries are those, for the most part, which have stood the test of time. Her article on Cumming and evangelical religion for the first time gave Lewes a conviction of her true genius in writing. She did not follow the opinions of the critics who had preceded her, but she thought out her own conclusions and expressed them in a forcible manner. Her style was a little heavy, and her manner lacking in sprightliness; but her judgments were sound, and her literary canons safe. In her notice of Tennyson's "Maud" she wrote: "As long as the English language is spoken, the word-music of Tennyson must charm the ear; and when the English has become a dead language, his wonderful concentration of thought into luminous speech, the exquisite pictures in which he has blended all the hues of reflection, feeling, and fancy, will cause him to be read as we read Homer, Pindar, and Horace." Her interpretation of Browning was accurate and sympathetic at a time when his poetry found little just appreciation: "Here, at least, is a man who has something of his own to tell us, and who can tell it impressively, if not with faultless art. There is nothing sickly or dreamy in him: he has a clear eye, a vigorous grasp, and courage to utter what he sees and handles. His robust energy is informed by a subtile, penetrating spirit, and this blending of opposite qualities gives his mind a rough piquancy that reminds one of a russet apple. His keen glance pierces into all the secrets of human character, but, being as thoroughly alive to the outward as to the inward, he reveals those secrets, not by a process of dissection, but by dramatic painting." Such writing as this is not so common that it ought to be forgotten, and it is a pity all her best criticisms have not been preserved for the instruction of those who enjoy this kind of writing.

Her reading went on with unabated zeal, and all of it of a kind to equip her mind with learning and breadth of literary culture. A good part of it was done with Lewes, and they alternately read aloud from whatever books they were interested in at the time. In a remarkable degree they were interested in the same books and subjects, and held the same opinions about them. This gave a satisfaction of the highest

kind to their studies, whether scientific or literary. They differed in their opinions sufficiently to give a zest to their intercourse; but on the main questions of life, philosophy and religion, they were essentially in harmony. In a letter to Miss Sara Hennell she says, of some opinion of hers which had been credited to Lewes: "If you referred to something in Mr. Lewes's letter, let me say, once for all, that you must not impute *my* opinions to *him* nor *vice versa*. The intense happiness of our union is derived in a high degree from the perfect freedom with which we each follow and declare our own impressions. In this respect I know no man so great as he — that difference of opinion rouses no egoistic irritation in him, and that he is ready to admit that another argument is the stronger the moment his intellect recognizes it." With this spirit of perfect toleration as a guide they carried on their studies, and read the great books of the world together. It is surprising to see from her letters and her journal how much she read, and how completely she kept on the highest levels of literature in the books she selected. The masters of the Greek, Latin, Italian, French, German, Spanish, and English literatures were all read by her, and always in the original. Her acquaintance with the best thought of the world must have been very extensive; and this applies to philosophy, science, and art, as well as to literature.

A mere hint of the books she read, and the extent of her reading, may give some idea of the breadth of her information. In August, 1868, for instance, she makes note in her journal of having read the first book of Lucretius, the sixth book of the Iliad, "Samson Agonistes," Warton's "History of English Poetry," the second volume of Grote, Marcus Aurelius, Dante's "Vita Nuova," a chapter in Comte's "Politique Positive," Guest on "English Rhythms," and Maurice's "Lectures on Casuistry." This is only a fair sample of what she was doing constantly, whether at home or seeking for health in the country or on the Continent. In the January following she read the twenty-fourth book of the Iliad, the first book of the "Faerie Queene," Clough's poems, and Mommsen's "Rome." Aloud to Lewes she read some Italian, Ben Jonson's "Alche-

mist" and "Volpone," Bright's speeches, four cantos of "Don Juan," and something from the "Spectator." In July she finished reading Lucretius, read Victor Hugo's "L'homme qui rit," Frau von Hillern's "Ein Arzt der Seele," Nisard's "History of French Literature," Jewitt's "Universal History," Sismondi's "Littérature du Midi," Drayton's "Nymphidia" and "Poly-Olbion," three chapters of Grote, several of the idyls of Theocritus, Reybaud's "Les Réformateurs Modernes," and Plato's "Republic" in various parts. It is not the amount of this reading, so much as the character of it, which is suggestive. She seldom read current novels, not finding them to her taste, and she did not discover in them anything that was satisfactory to her love of imagination and original power. She read much in science, keeping herself well posted in regard to the discoveries and speculations of the day. History and biography she thoroughly enjoyed, and read extensively. It was, however, in the great field of literature proper that she found her keenest satisfaction. She studied the great literary productions with enthusiasm and a warm appreciation; and she ranged far and wide among the books of imagination and genius. She loved all that was great, and did not confine her appreciation to the masters of any special school, or to the cultivators of any particular style.

The summer of 1856 was spent on the west coast of England, where Lewes was full of employment in studying marine life. His wife was his constant companion, and entered into the full spirit of his investigations. He gave a full account of his labors, with affectionate mention of his wife, in his "Seaside Studies." But the summer was mainly memorable as being the time when she determined to try her hand at the writing of a novel. She mentioned to a correspondent her desire to get rid of the article-writing then occupying her, that she might have time to begin her story. Her work on the current "Westminster" having been completed September 19, she began to write the "Sad Fortunes of Amos Barton" on the 22d, and it was completed November 5. Her own account of how she came to write a novel is so interesting that it cannot be omitted: "September, 1856, made a new era in my life, for

it was then I began to write fiction. It had always been a vague dream of mine that some time or other I might write a novel; and my shadowy conception of what the novel was to be, varied, of course, from one epoch of my life to another. But I never went further towards the actual writing of the novel than an introductory chapter describing a Staffordshire village and the life of the neighboring farm-houses; and as the years passed on I lost any hope that I should ever be able to write a novel, just as I desponded about everything else in my future life. I always thought I was deficient in dramatic power, both of construction and dialogue, but I felt I should be at my ease in the descriptive parts of a novel. My 'introductory chapter' was pure description, though there were good materials in it for dramatic presentation. It happened to be among the papers I had with me in Germany, and one evening at Berlin something led me to read it to George. He was struck with it as a bit of concrete description, and it suggested to him the possibility of my being able to write a novel, though he distrusted — indeed, disbelieved in — my possession of any dramatic power. Still, he began to think that I might as well try some time what I could do in fiction, and by-and-by, when we came back to England, and I had greater success than he expected in other kinds of writing, his impression that it was worth while to see how far my mental power would go towards the production of a novel was strengthened. He began to say very positively, 'You must try and write a story,' and when we were at Tenby he urged me to begin at once. I deferred it, however, after my usual fashion with work that does not present itself as an absolute duty. But one morning, as I was thinking what should be the subject of my first story, my thoughts merged themselves into a dreamy doze, and I imagined myself writing a story, of which the title was 'The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton.' I was soon wide awake again and told George. He said, 'Oh, what a capital title!' and from that time I had settled in my mind that this should be my first story. George used to say, 'It may be a failure — it may be that you are unable to write fiction. Or, perhaps it may be just good enough to warrant

your trying again.' Again, 'You may have a *chef-d'œuvre* at once — there 's no telling.' But his prevalent impression was, that though I could hardly write a *poor* novel, my effort would want the highest quality of fiction — dramatic presentation. He used to say, 'You have wit, description, and philosophy — those go a good way towards the production of a novel. It is worth while for you to try the experiment.' We determined that if my story turned out good enough we would send it to Blackwood; but George thought the more probable result was that I should have to lay it aside and try again. But when we returned to Richmond I had to write my article on 'Silly Novels,' and my review of Contemporary Literature for the 'Westminster,' so that I did not begin my story till September 22. After I had begun it, as we were walking in the park, I mentioned to George that I had thought of the plan of writing a series of stories, containing sketches drawn from my own observation of the clergy, and calling them 'Scenes from Clerical Life,' opening with 'Amos Barton.' He at once accepted the notion as a good one — fresh and striking; and about a week afterwards, when I read him the first part of 'Amos,' he had no longer any doubt about my ability to carry out the plan. The scene at Cross Farm, he said, satisfied him that I had the very element he had been doubtful about — it was clear I could write good dialogue. There still remained the question whether I could command any pathos; and that was to be decided by the mode in which I treated Milly's death. One night George went to town on purpose to leave me a quiet evening for writing it. I wrote the chapter from the news brought by the shepherd to Mrs. Hackit, to the moment when Amos is dragged from the bedside, and I read it to George when he came home. We both cried over it, and then he came up to me and kissed me, saying, 'I think your pathos is better than your fun.'"

On the completion of the story Lewes sent it to Blackwood, who soon wrote accepting it, but in a way which was discouraging to the author. She was always very susceptible to the manner in which her work was received by other persons, easily discouraged, and needing to be sustained by the sympa-

thy and approbation of others. The tone of criticism in which Blackwood wrote dismayed her; but as soon as he found how she felt, he wrote with more of approval, and promised to accept the whole series of stories, as proposed. In sending the story Lewes spoke of it with the highest praise, and as surpassing everything of the kind since the "Vicar of Wakefield" in its humor, pathos, vivid presentation, and nice observation. When Blackwood had become acquainted with it he accepted this opinion as a just one, and said that the author had struck a new vein in fiction, and one full of promise. "It is a long time," he wrote, "since I have read anything so fresh, so humorous, and so touching." He sent fifty guineas for "Amos," and this mark of her success gave the author a new impulse for going on with her writing. On Christmas day, 1856, she began to write "Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story," and she found it easier to proceed with it because Albert Smith had sent her word of how thoroughly he enjoyed the first story. Another reader found it to resemble Goldsmith's "Vicar;" and Blackwood thoroughly approved of the first part of the Gilfil story, when it reached him. "Amos Barton" had been sent anonymously, Lewes simply describing the author as a friend of his, and refusing even to say that he was or was not a clergyman. The shyness of the author, and her fear of failure, probably both contributed towards the purpose of adopting a fictitious name. Lewes wrote of her "shy, shrinking, ambitious nature," when telling Blackwood of her discouragement on the receipt of his first letter. When Blackwood was anxious about her name, she signed her letter "George Eliot," fixing on the first name because it was Lewes's Christian name, and on the Eliot because it "was a good, mouth-filling, easily pronounced word." In one of her letters she gives this reason for using a fictitious name: "Whatever may be the success of my stories, I shall be resolute in preserving my *incognito*, having observed that a *nom de plume* secures all the advantages without the disagreeables of reputation. Perhaps, therefore, it will be well to give you my prospective name, as a tub to throw to the whale in case of curious inquiries; and accordingly I subscribe myself, best and most

sympathizing of editors, yours very truly, GEORGE ELIOT." In another letter she farther explained her reasons for the use of this name: "For several reasons I am very anxious to retain my *incognito* for some time to come, and, to an author not already famous, anonymity is the highest prestige. Besides, if George Eliot turns out a bull-dog and an ineffective writer — a mere flash in the pan — I, for one, am determined to cut him on the first intimation of that disagreeable fact."

On the 16th of March, George Lewes and George Eliot took their way to Plymouth, Penzance, and the Scilly Isles for a four months' period of rest and scientific study. Here they rambled, read, studied marine life, and wrote, in a very pleasant and happy manner. Jersey was also visited, and here were spent several weeks of a sweet, peaceful life, rambling with Nature and writing of Mr. Gilfil and his sorrows. That story was completed, and on the 18th of April "Janet's Repentance" was begun. When the first parts of the latter were sent to Blackwood he was inclined to dislike them, and there was a new discouragement for the author; but as it went on he came to like it more and more, until he had much admiration for it when completed.

On the 24th of July the Jersey sojourn came to an end, and there were visits of friends at their home in Richmond. There also came new indications of the success of the clerical stories, including praise from Thackeray, which was most of all desired, for George Eliot saw in him the greatest living novel-writer. October 9, "Janet's Repentance" was completed, and on the 22d "Adam Bede" was begun. Arrangements were soon made for the publication of the "Clerical Scenes" in two volumes, which had a good sale, and one hundred and eighty pounds were paid for them in this form.

Life now became brighter and happier to George Eliot. She had a happy home, and she had found a work to do which satisfied the desire of her mind for activity of a kind likely to help others. In some measure the early tone of discouragement and despondency now passed from her mind, and she took a more hopeful view of her own life. In December she wrote to Sara Hennell that their affairs were very prosperous

just then, "making sunshine in a shady, or, rather, in a foggy place." "I get more hungry for knowledge every day," she adds, "and less able to satisfy my hunger." She writes in her journal of being "alone this evening with very thankful, solemn thoughts — feeling the great and unhoped-for blessings that have been given me in life. This last year, especially, has been marked by inward progress and outward advantages. . . . I have had much sympathy from my readers in Blackwood, and feel a deep satisfaction in having done a bit of faithful work that will perhaps remain, like a primrose root in the hedgerow, and gladden and chasten human hearts in years to come." On the last night of the year 1857 she confided to her journal the new happiness and strength which had come to her, and she wrote in a tone of saddened exultation — sad, and yet resolute with a hopeful purpose: "My life has deepened unspeakably during the last year: I feel a greater capacity for moral and intellectual enjoyment, a more acute sense of my deficiencies in the past, a more solemn desire to be faithful to coming duties, than I remember at any former period of my life. And my happiness has deepened too; the blessedness of a perfect love and union grows daily. Few women, I fear, have had such reason as I have to think the long, sad years of youth were worth living for the sake of middle age. Our prospects are very bright, too." Earlier in the same year she had written to one of her friends in the same tone of happiness and strength because of the new life she had gained, and of regret for the saddened life she had lived in the past. "I am very happy — happy in the highest blessing life can give us, the perfect love and sympathy of a nature that stimulates my own to healthful activity. I feel, too, that all the terrible pain I have gone through in past years, partly from the defects of my own nature, partly from outward things, has probably been a preparation for some special work that I may do before I die. That is a blessed hope, to be rejoiced in with trembling. But even if that hope should be unfulfilled, I am contented to have lived and suffered for the sake of what has already been."

The constitutional despondency from which George Eliot

always suffered had its marked effect on her life and on her writings. It was difficult for her to believe in herself, and yet she had great ambitions and an egotism of her own. It often occurs that the most sensitive and shrinking persons are the most eagerly confident of their own powers, and yet they need encouragement to bring them out into full activity of thought and expression. She was morbidly conscious of her own faults, and often more inclined to dwell on them than to believe in her own powers of doing good in the world. She constantly stood in need of encouragement, and of being stimulated to activity by the good opinions of others. She demanded the sense of success in order to work readily and easily, and her morbid fear of herself led her away from the faith she needed in her own powers. So early as when she was twenty years of age, she wrote to the Brays this very truthful statement about the kind of help most likely to do her good: "I want encouraging rather than warning and checking. I believe I am so constituted that I shall never be cured of my faults except by God's discipline. If human beings would but believe it, they do me the most good by saying to me the kindest things truth will permit; and really I cannot hope those will be superlatively kind." To Charles Bray she wrote of this need at the time when she was seriously beginning the work of novel-writing: "I never think what I write is good for anything till other people tell me so, and even then it always seems to me as if I should never write anything *else* worth reading. Ah, how much good we may do each other by a few friendly words, and the opportunities for them are so much more frequent than for friendly deeds! We want people to feel with us more than to act for us." Writing to Mrs. Bray just when she was beginning "Adam Bede," she makes an agonized confession of her need for sympathy and love, and of that terrible fear which hung over her, that people could not love her as she had need of it: "I can't help losing belief that people love me — the unbelief is in my nature, and no sort of fork will drive it finally out. I can't help wondering that you can think of me in the past with much pleasure. It all seems so painful to me — made up of blunders

and selfishness — and it only comes back upon me as a thing to be forgiven. This is honest, painful truth, and not sentimentality." A little later on she wrote again to the same friend: "I have been blasphemous enough sometimes to think that I had never been good and attractive enough to win any little share of the honest, disinterested friendship there is in the world." Even after fame had come to her, with the publication of "Adam Bede," it was impossible for her to look at her own life with a cheerful hope and a confident reliance on her own powers; and her doubts are once more poured into the sympathetic ears of Mrs. Bray: "The weight of my future life — the self-questioning whether my nature will be able to meet the heavy demands upon it, both of personal duty and intellectual production, presses upon me almost continually in a way that prevents me even from tasting the quiet joy I might have in the *work done*. Buoyancy and exultation, I fancy, are out of the question when one has lived so long as I have. But I am the better for every word of encouragement, and am helped over many days by such a note as yours. I often think of my dreams when I was four or five and twenty. I thought then how happy fame would make me! I feel no regret that the fame, as such, brings no pleasure; but it is a grief to me that I do not constantly feel strong in thankfulness that my past life has vindicated its uses and given me reason for gladness that such an unpromising woman-child was born into the world." These quotations might be increased by many more of the same kind, but they are enough to show the tendency of her mind.

It is sad that a mind so great should have been so constantly tormented by these doubts. She had serious faults in her youth, without doubt, but she was too conscious of them, and too willing to accuse herself of their existence. Her writing would have been more cheerful and greater in its uplifting influence if these morbid fears had not been so perpetually with her. The element of sadness in all her books grew out of this source; and few of her sympathetic readers can fail to feel the presence and the depression of it. This distrust of her own powers was a result, in some measure, of an egotism that

was ever acutely sensitive. A morbid sensitiveness, joined to a restless egotism, was the source of her doubts. Not the less painful, however, was the struggle which came to her from this cause, and which lasted to the very day of her death. The creative instinct was strong within her, and the confident ambition which it gives she felt from her earliest youth; but the sensitive spirit shrunk within itself, and could not be made active except by the encouragement of others. Nothing could have been more fortunate than that she had in her husband a friend capable of seeing and appreciating genius wherever it is found, and of that boundless cheerfulness and courage which acted as an antidote to her own fears. To him she rightly attributed whatever of success she met with as an author, for it may be doubted if she would ever have become a creative artist at all without his sympathy and appreciation. That she found at the moment when it was most needed, and she lived on it and in it through the remainder of her career as an author.

There is great need of being cautious about drawing inferences concerning this morbidness of her mind; but the mark of it is on her writings as surely as the stamp of Byron's morbidness is on his poetry. Her theories of life were colored by it, and her religion took form from it in no small measure. The element of evil in human life grew too prominent in her thought under the influence of this depression; and it is possible that it made her too little willing to embrace the optimism which is an accompaniment of Theism. She was too keen and strong a thinker to suffer her opinions to be shaped by her feelings alone; but a mind so sensitive could not well or easily throw off the effects of a tendency to look on the dark side of life. She had a morbid dislike of Calvinism, and yet there was something of the stern element of Calvinism in her thinking on religious subjects. The joyous sympathy with the universe and the life it expresses, which is to be found in some of the greatest natures, she did not have. She had sympathy, but she did not have the exultation in life and its transcendent powers which is to be found in the thought and life of the greatest minds.

At the beginning of 1858 came letters full of encouragement from Dickens, Froude, Faraday, and Mrs. Carlyle, to whom copies of the "Clerical Scenes" had been sent. The quick discernment of Dickens made him believe the author was a woman, although shielded under a masculine name. If left to himself, he wrote that he would have addressed the author as a woman. "I have observed what seemed to me such womanly touches in those moving fictions, that the assurance on the title-page is insufficient to satisfy me even now. If they originated with no woman, I believe that no man ever before had the art of making himself mentally so like a woman since the world began." Others felt confident they could not have been written by a woman, misled probably by their intimate sympathy with the clerical profession, and their indication of abundant knowledge. This letter from Dickens gave her the greatest pleasure, and she wrote of it to Blackwood: "There can hardly be any climax of approbation for me after this; and I am so deeply moved by the finely felt and finely expressed sympathy of the letter, that the iron mask of my *incognito* seems quite painful in forbidding me to tell Dickens how thoroughly his generous impulse has been appreciated."

On the 7th of April, 1858, Lewes and his wife set out for Munich, where they spent the next three months. A change of scene, the desire for quiet, and the greater cheapness of living caused them to take this step. The study of pictures, the hearing of music, the reading of the best books, the steady writing of chapter after chapter on the works in hand, made up their busy employment. New friends were also made, and among them Bodenstedt, Liebig, Heyse, and Geibel. Liebig was particularly kind, and he took a benevolent liking to George Eliot. "He lives in very good German style," she wrote to Sara Hennell; "has a handsome suite of apartments, and makes a greater figure than most of the professors. His manners are charming — easy, graceful, benignant, and all the more conspicuous because he is so quiet and low-spoken among the loud talkers here." Bodenstedt was found to be a charming man, and she said that "Heyse is like a painter's poet, ideally beautiful; rather brilliant in his talk, and alto-

gether pleasing." She also saw something of Strauss, for he made a week's visit to Munich while she was there. When she had a quarter of an hour's chat with him alone she was very agreeably impressed by him. "He speaks with very choice words, like a man strictly truthful in the use of language," she wrote.

On the 7th of July they left Munich, and proceeded to Dresden, by the way of Salzburg, Ischl, Vienna, and Prague, where they remained until the end of August. They were at home by the first of September, and in February they went to live at Holly Lodge, Wandsworth. A few days after their return from Germany the second volume of "Adam Bede" was sent off to Blackwood. This story had been growing while George Eliot was on the Continent, and it was read to Lewes as it was written. The third volume followed in November, and Blackwood offered her £800 for the copyright, which were accepted. It was at first proposed to publish it in "Blackwood's Magazine," but the editor had some doubts concerning the course of the story, and that project was finally given up. At Munich, when the second volume was being written, Lewes expressed the conviction that Adam Bede was taking too passive a part in the drama of life about him, and that he should be brought into active collision with Arthur. "This doubt haunted me," says the author in her recollections, "and out of it grew the scene in the wood between Arthur and Adam; the fight came to me as a necessity one night at the Munich opera, when I was listening to 'William Tell.'" The second volume was written uninterruptedly and with great enjoyment in the long quiet mornings in Dresden; and the third volume was written very rapidly in her own home, and was left without the slightest alteration of the first draft. She greatly enjoyed the writing of "Adam Bede," and for the first time while it was in progress she became thoroughly conscious of her power. It gave her less travail of soul than any other of her books, and she felt that she had done something in writing it that was worthy of her effort.

Her account of the origin of "Adam Bede" is very interesting, and it is suggestive in regard to her methods of dealing

with the facts of real life. "The germ of 'Adam Bede' was an anecdote told me by my Methodist Aunt Samuel (the wife of my father's younger brother) — an anecdote from her own experience. We were sitting together one afternoon during her visit to me at Griff, probably in 1839 or 1840, when it occurred to her to tell me how she had visited a condemned criminal — a very ignorant girl, who had murdered her child and refused to confess; how she had stayed with her praying through the night, and how the poor creature at last broke out into tears and confessed her crime. My aunt afterwards went with her in the cart to the place of execution; and she described to me the great respect with which this ministry of hers was regarded by the official people about the jail. The story, told by my aunt with great feeling, affected me deeply, and I never lost the impression of that afternoon and our talk together; but I believe I never mentioned it, through all the intervening years, till something prompted me to tell it to George in December, 1856, when I had begun to write the 'Scenes of Clerical Life.' He remarked that the scene in the prison would make a fine element in a story; and I afterwards began to think of blending this and some other recollections of my aunt in one story, with some points in my father's early life and character. The problem of construction that remained was to make the unhappy girl one of the chief *dramatis personæ* and connect her with the hero. At first I thought of making the story one of the series of 'Scenes;' but afterwards, when several motives had induced me to close these with 'Janet's Repentance,' I determined on making what we always called in our conversation 'My Aunt's Story' the subject of a long novel, which I accordingly began to write on the 22d October, 1857. The character of Dinah grew out of my recollections of my aunt, but Dinah is not at all like my aunt, who was a very small, black-eyed woman, and (as I was told, for I never heard her preach) very vehement in her style of preaching. She had left off preaching when I knew her, being probably sixty years old, and in delicate health; and she had become, as my father told me, much more gentle and subdued than she had been in the days of her active ministry and

bodily strength, when she could not rest without exhorting and remonstrating in season and out of season. I was very fond of her, and enjoyed the few weeks of her stay with me greatly. She was loving and kind to me, and I could talk to her about my inward life, which was closely shut up from those usually round me. I saw her only twice again, for much shorter periods — once at her own home at Wirksworth, in Derbyshire, and once at my father's last residence, Foleshill. The character of Adam and one or two incidents connected with him were suggested by my father's early life; but Adam is not my father any more than Dinah is my aunt. Indeed, there is not a single portrait in 'Adam Bede'; only the suggestions of experience wrought up into new combinations. When I began to write it, the only elements I had determined on, besides the character of Dinah, were the character of Adam, his relation to Arthur Donnithorne, and their mutual relations to Hetty — that is, to the girl who commits child-murder — the scene in the prison being, of course, the climax towards which I worked. Everything else grew out of the characters and their mutual relations. Dinah's ultimate relation to Adam was suggested by George, when I had read to him the first part of the first volume: he was so delighted with the presentation of Dinah, and so convinced that the reader's interest would centre in her, that he wanted her to be the principal figure at the last. I accepted the idea at once, and from the end of the third chapter worked with it constantly in view."

The publication of "Adam Bede" at once placed George Eliot in the front rank of living novelists; and no less than eighteen thousand copies were sold during the first year after its issue. Very shortly there began to come to her indications of the favor with which it was accepted by the public; and she cherished many of these as helps against her constitutional discouragement. She reckoned it among her best triumphs that Mrs. Carlyle found herself "in charity with the whole human race" after reading it. Charles Reade said it was "the finest thing since Shakespeare;" and it was quoted by Charles Buxton in Parliament. Bulwer found it worthy of

"great admiration;" and Professor Aytoun had to send the last two volumes out of the house because he neglected his work in the absorbing interest with which he read it. Dickens wrote her "the noblest, most touching letter" about "Adam;" and Herbert Spencer sent an enthusiastic letter, in which he said, as she reports him, that "he feels the better for reading it — really words to be treasured up."

One of her schoolmates discovered the real author, and one of her intimate friends made the same discovery from reading extracts in a review article. To this friend she wrote with an eager expression of delight in the heartfelt recognition of her work, and the reception of it as hers. "You are the first friend," she wrote, "who has given any symptom of knowing me; the first heart that has recognized me in a book which has come from my heart of hearts. . . . I have no time for exultation; on the contrary, these last months have been sadder than usual to me, and I have thought more of the future and the much work that remains to be done in life than of anything that has been achieved. But I think your letter to-day gave me more joy, more heart-felt glow, than all the letters or reviews or other testimonies of success that have come to me." To the Brays and Hennells she made known the authorship, when they were making a brief visit to London; "and they seemed overwhelmed with surprise." On their return home she wrote them a letter full of feeling at the kindness and sympathy they had shown her, but expressing her great sensitiveness in regard to having her own work talked about and praised to herself. "If people were to buzz round me with their remarks, or compliments, I should lose the repose of mind and truthfulness of production without which no good, healthy books can be written. Talking about my books, I find, has much the same malign effect on me as talking of my feelings or my religion." In the same letter she protested that "there is not a single portrait in the book, nor will there be in any future book of mine." She acknowledged that there were portraits in "Clerical Scenes;" "but that was my first bit of art, and my hand was not well in."

The great success of "Adam Bede" made her more than

ever anxious about her writing; and though Mrs. Gaskell had written her that she had never read anything so complete and beautiful in fiction in her life before, she could not but feel that a greater responsibility had been placed on her to do the very best that was possible. With success came not only the demand for true work, but all the annoyances which are incident to popularity. One of these, in her case, took the form of a claim of the authorship of her books on the part of an obscure attorney living in Nuneaton. The local touches in her books were quickly discovered, and attracted wide attention in Warwickshire. The unknown author was sought for, and some zealous person found him in a Mr. Liggins. During several months her letters are full of the claim made on behalf of this man, and it annoyed her excessively. It required much effort to convince some of those who pressed his claim. With much chagrin she learned that her intimate friends in Coventry were on the side of Liggins, and that no one in that region thought of her in connection with the authorship. "Mr. Liggins I remember," she wrote, "as a vision of my childhood; a tall, black-coated, genteel young clergyman, in-embryo;" but it was many months before she heard the last of him. Then appeared an "Adam Bede, junior," purporting to be a sequel to "Adam Bede," and had a good sale. To one so sensitive, such small experiences as these proved a source of much trouble, and rendered the ways of authorship anything but pleasant to travel.

However unpleasant it was to have her work attributed to another person, she was soon at work on a second novel. In July, 1859, she made a brief trip to Lucerne, where she spent three days with Mrs. Congreve, a neighbor and an intimate friend, while Lewes made a flying visit to his sons. In September there was a short trip to Penmaenmawr, where three weeks were spent. In the mean time the new novel was going on, but with much more of travail than in the case of "Adam Bede." In her journal of September 18 she wrote: "In much anxiety about my new novel;" but it had been commenced several months before. At first she thought of calling it "The Tullivers," or perhaps "St. Ogg's on the Floss." When the

first volume was completed, in October, she wrote of it as "Sister Maggie." Blackwood accepted it in December, but he was not satisfied with the title. Lewes preferred to name it "The House of Tulliver; or, Life on the Floss;" and she proposed "The Tullivers; or, Life on the Floss." At last Blackwood suggested "The Mill on the Floss," and she accepted it with a slight protest. March 21, 1860, the new novel was completed, with a feeling of sadness, usual to her on such occasions. "Your letter yesterday morning," she wrote to Blackwood, "helped to inspire me for the last eleven pages, if they have any inspiration in them. They were written in a *furor*, but I dare say there is not a word different from what it would have been if I had written them at the slowest pace." She seems to have regarded "The Mill on the Floss" as in many respects superior to "Adam Bede;" and she was inclined to reject whatever was said against its morality and its art. She would not be converted to a rejection of Maggie's position towards Stephen. "If I am wrong there," she wrote to Blackwood, — "if I did not really know what my heroine would feel and do under the circumstances in which I deliberately placed her, — I ought not to have written this book at all, but quite a different book, if any. If the ethics of art do not admit the truthful presentation of a character especially noble, but liable to great error — error that is anguish to its own nobleness — then, it seems to me, the ethics of art are too narrow, and must be widened to correspond with a widening psychology." She admitted that the final tragedy was not adequately prepared for, owing to her interest in the subject having beguiled her into too great expansion in the first two volumes. The book had an even greater success than "Adam Bede," however; and there was far less in connection with its publication to annoy the author. The name of George Eliot had become a recognized one in literature, and her position was now secure. She had found the true work of her life, and was as far satisfied with it as she could be with any work. The success which she had attained gave her strength and courage, and, what was more needed, the assurance that the public demanded the work

she could produce. She accepted gladly the opportunity which was given her through her novels to touch and mould the feelings and aspirations of her fellows. Their opinions she did not give much heed to, for she believed that these were not the shaping influences in life. With a high and earnest purpose she went on with her novel-writing, having faith in art and its mission, but also being possessed with the conviction that an emotional purpose of a still higher importance was to be effected through it.

The last week in March, 1860, George Eliot started for Italy in company with her husband. They went by the way of Paris and Mont Cenis. She had looked forward to this journey for years, rather with the hope of the new elements it would bring to her culture than with the hope of immediate pleasure. The disappointment of not finding the highest delight in every famous object she keenly felt in her travelling; but she saw that its main good must be in the enlargement of the general life of the traveller. A few hours of rest were had in Turin, and as the travellers departed they had a sight of Cavour, who was "a pleasant man to look upon, with a smile half kind, half caustic." Genoa was reached on a bright, warm spring morning, and there was a faithful, though fragmentary, remembrance of it as it was seen eleven years before. Leghorn, Pisa, and Civita Vecchia were visited and examined on the way to Rome. They arrived from the way of the Campagna, and there was nothing imposing to be seen, the first impression being one of disappointment. The art and antiquities of the city were carefully studied, and all its life was keenly enjoyed. There were other objects, also, to attract the attention of an Englishwoman, and these were visited with more of inspiration than those famous places which were more imposing. A spot that touched her deeply was Shelley's grave in the English cemetery. "And there, under the shadow of the old walls on one side, and cypresses on the other, lies the *cor cordium*, forever at rest from the unloving cavillers of this world, whether or not he may have entered on other purifying struggles in some world unseen by us. The grave of Keats lies far off from Shelley's,

unshaded by wall or trees. It is painful to look upon, because of the inscription on the stone, which seems to make him still speak in bitterness from his grave." There was an eye, too, for what was human, and for the beings now finding happiness or pain on the earth about her. The world of living human experiences was always to her far more than any world of the dead past, and she ever felt the throb and anguish of it, wherever she might be. "Oh, the beautiful men and women and children here," she wrote to a friend. "Such wonderful babies with wise eyes! such grand-featured mothers nursing them!" Everywhere she saw the Madonna and the child looking upon her from the living human faces. She saw a crippled girl at the door of a church that looked at them with a face full of such pathetic sweetness and beauty that George Eliot felt the memory of it could never leave her again. On the 29th of April Rome was left, and the next day Naples was entered. The weather in Rome had been very bad, but that in Naples was brilliant. The beauty of the city and the country about was enjoyed with enthusiasm, and she had great delight in the transcendent fairness of nature on every hand. She thought that Naples must be the most beautiful city in the world. After remaining there a week they set out in a carriage for Pæstum, visiting Salerno on the way, as well as Sorrento and Amalfi. They took steamer for Leghorn, and then on to Florence, taking a look at "dear Pisa under the blue sky" by the way. Florence was greatly enjoyed, its architecture and its paintings eagerly studied. There were visits to Fiesole, Siena — "that fine old town built on an abrupt height overlooking a wise, wise plain" — and Michael Angelo's house in the Via Ghibellina. George Eliot was greatly attracted by the art treasures of Italy, and gave to them an enthusiastic interest, and yet she studied them with a carefully critical eye, not always accepting the popular verdict in regard to them. She was far too much in love with them to care for the political problems then agitating Italy. "On a first journey to the greatest centres of art," she wrote to John Blackwood, "one must be excused for letting one's public spirit go to sleep a little. As for me, I am thrown

into a state of humiliating passivity by the sight of the great things done in the far past — it seems as if life were not long enough to learn, and as if my own activity were so completely dwarfed by comparison that I should never have courage for more creation of my own. There is only one thing that has an opposite and stimulating effect: it is the comparative rarity, even here, of great and truthful art, and the abundance of wretched imitation and falsity. Every hand is wanted in the world that can do a little genuine, sincere work."

From Florence the travellers went to Bologna, Ferrara, and Padua, on their way to Venice. The city by the sea she found to be more beautiful than romances had feigned, and she was much impressed by its quiet. The Palace of the Doges she found to be what Ruskin had called it, — one of the two most perfect buildings in the world. St. Mark's was found to be dark and heavy within, and ill-suited to the Catholic worship. When the dreamy beauty of Venice was left behind, they journeyed through Verona, Milan, and by Como, then across the Splügen to Zurich. In the latter city Lewes had a pleasant interview with Moleschott; and then the journey was towards home, a few days being spent in Berne. They arrived home July 1, bringing Charles Lewes, the oldest son of Mr. Lewes, with them. A place was soon obtained for him in the post-office, and George Eliot exercised over him the most motherly care. One of her first tasks on returning was the reading of Sara Hennell's "Thoughts in Aid of Faith," — a book she greatly enjoyed, and with which she was largely in sympathy. Especially in its recognition of the organic outgrowth of the present from the past, and the very great and highly important influence exercised by Christianity on the life of the world, did she entirely agree with it. The need of being nearer the city was felt at this time, and a house was taken at 10 Harewood Square, which was exchanged after a brief period for one at 16 Blandford Square. Not long after moving into the latter house the custom was begun of inviting a few friends to a quiet reception on Sunday afternoons from two to six. At first, these gatherings consisted of two or

three lovers of music, who came to play on the new piano, bought at this time. Then they grew into a gathering for conversation, and brought together many of the leading minds of England in a delightful social manner. According to Mr. Cross, these gatherings have occupied far too much attention in the accounts which have been given of George Eliot, and she seldom alluded to them in her letters. They were not an attempt in any way to revive the spirit of the Parisian *salon*, but merely a result of George Eliot's desire to meet her friends without the necessity of making and returning calls. In a certain way she enjoyed company, but she had not the strength for the social demands of a great city; and at these gatherings she could meet all her friends, the leaders of the literary, scientific, artistic, and philanthropic circles, as well as such younger and rising persons as might choose to make her acquaintance in this way. "When London was full," says Mr. Kegan Paul, "the little drawing-room in St. John's Wood was now and then crowded to overflowing with those who were glad to give their best of conversation, of information, and sometimes of music, always to listen with eager attention to what their hostess might say, when all that was said was worth hearing. Always ready, but never rapid, her talk was not only good in itself, but it encouraged the same in others, since she was an excellent listener, and eager to hear." "Nearly all who were most eminent in art, science, literature, philanthropy," says Mr. Frederic Myers, "might be met from time to time at her Sunday-afternoon receptions. There were many women, too, drawn often from among very different traditions of thought and belief, by the unfeigned goodness which they recognized in Mrs. Lewes's look and speech, and sometimes illumining with some fair young face a *salon* whose grave talk needed the grace which they could bestow. And there was sure to be a considerable admixture of men not as yet famous. Mrs. Lewes's manner had a grave simplicity, which rose in closer converse into an almost pathetic anxiety to give of her best — to establish a genuine human relation between herself and her interlocutor — to utter words which should remain as an active influence for good in the hearts of those who heard

them. To some of her literary admirers this serious tone was distasteful; they were inclined to resent the prominence given to moral ideas in a quarter from which they preferred to look merely for intellectual refreshment. Mrs. Lewes's humor, though fed from a deep perception of the incongruities of human fates, had not, except in intimate moments, any buoyant or contagious quality, and in all her talk — full of matter and wisdom, and exquisitely worded as it was — there was the same pervading air of strenuous seriousness which was more welcome to those whose object was distinctively to learn from her, than to those who merely wished an idle and brilliant hour. To her, these mixed receptions were a great effort. Her mind did not move easily from one individual to another, and when she afterwards thought that she had failed to understand some difficulty which had been laid before her, — had spoken the wrong word to some expectant heart, — she would suffer from almost morbid accesses of self-reproach." These accounts may be supplemented by that given by Mr. Cross. "I think," he says, "that the majority of visitors delighted chiefly to come for the chance of a few words with George Eliot alone. When the drawing-room door of The Priory opened, a first glance revealed her always in the same low arm-chair on the left-hand side of the fire. On entering, a visitor's eye was at once arrested by the massive head. The abundant hair, streaked with gray now, was draped with lace, arranged mantilla-fashion, coming to a point at the top of the forehead. If she were engaged in conversation, her body was usually bent forward with eager, anxious desire to get as close as possible to the person with whom she talked. She had a great dislike to raising her voice, and often became so wholly absorbed in conversation that the announcement of an incoming visitor sometimes failed to attract her attention; but the moment the eyes were lifted up, and recognized a friend, they smiled a rare welcome, — sincere, cordial, grave, — a welcome that was felt to come straight from the heart, not graduated according to any social distinction. But her talk, I think, was always most enjoyable *à deux*. It was not produced for effect, nor from the lip, but welled up from a

heart and mind intent on the one person with whom she happened to be speaking. She was never weary of giving of her best so far as the wish to give was concerned."

There were also frequent gatherings of a few friends to a dinner or on some other occasion, when only two or three were present. On these occasions George Eliot was at her best, for then she met her friends face to face, and no effort was required for the right disposition and entertainment of a large company. She enjoyed conversation, but she had no special talent in that direction, as Lewes had. He was bright, witty, full of vivacity, brilliant in repartee and in the telling of stories. He gave to the Sunday-afternoon gatherings the element of life and social attraction which was wanting in her, and he was the real manager who made them go on with success and satisfaction to all present. He could bring people together, he could keep the conversation moving with unflagging interest, and he could impart to it that life and sparkle which made it delightful. One of the best of story-tellers, and with a remarkable dramatic gift, he was at home with all persons. These gatherings gave to George Eliot's life a much needed element of contact with cultured men and women, and they helped to add to her reputation and her fame. Her health did not permit her mingling in society so much as she would have desired, and she never entered so fully into London life as she would have done had she been strong enough to endure the fatigue and the nervous strain. She husbanded her strength for literary work, and brought her friends to her own door.

After moving to London, the afternoons were spent in walking, unless the weather was very bad. The Zoölogical Gardens were frequently visited, even several times a week, and she found the birds and beasts there most congenial to her spirit. The habit was also begun of attending the best musical entertainments in the city; and, for the sake of economy, even the popular concerts of the best music were resorted to every week. From this time she gave up all attempt to make visits to her friends, and wholly depended on their calling on her. "I have found it a necessity of my London life," she wrote

to one of them, "to make the rule of *never* paying visits. Without a carriage, and with my easily perturbed health, London distances would make any other rule quite irreconcilable for me with any efficient use of my days; and I am obliged to give up the few visits which would be really attractive and fruitful, in order to avoid the many visits which would be the reverse. It is only by saying, 'I never make visits,' that I can escape being ungracious or unkind — only by renouncing all social intercourse but such as comes to our own fireside, that I can escape sacrificing the chief objects of my life. I think your imagination will supply all I have left unsaid, all the details which run away with our hours, when our life extends at all beyond our own homes; and I am not afraid of your misinterpreting my stay-at-home rule into churlishness." This was, indeed, the only way in which she could secure the leisure and the rest necessary to going on with her writing. It required the most careful husbanding of her resources physically, in order to the doing of any work whatever. Her mind was easily distracted, and periods of despondency brought on.

For some months after moving into London she suffered greatly from ill-health, and was affected by extreme languor and unbroken fatigue from morning to night. This resulted in utter self-distrust and despair of ever being equal to the demands of life. The loss of the country was very bitter to her, and it had its effect in bringing on the mental depression. The worst result of this low state of body and mind was a loss of faith in her own powers, and an incapacity for literary invention. It was many months before her mind had acquired the elasticity necessary to creation; and, though a great project was revolving in her mind, she was not able to give it shape.

She wrote to Blackwood from Florence that she had been stimulated by that city "to entertain rather an ambitious project," which she proposed to keep a secret from everybody else. Two months after her return she wrote again of the same project: "I must tell you the secret, though I am distrusting my power to make it grow into a published fact. When we

were in Florence I was rather fired with the idea of writing an historical romance — scene, Florence; period, the close of the fifteenth century, which was marked by Savonarola's career and martyrdom. Mr. Lewes has encouraged me to persevere in the project, saying that I should probably do something in historical romance rather different in character from what has been done before." It was her desire, however, as she explained to Blackwood, to write another English novel before beginning this one on an historical period. While delayed by ill-health from going on steadily with her work, there came suddenly to her the idea of "Silas Marner." "It seems to me," she wrote to her publisher, "that nobody will take any interest in it but myself, for it is extremely unlike the popular stories going; but Mr. Lewes declares I am wrong, and says it is as good as anything I have done. It is a story of old-fashioned village life, which has unfolded itself from the merest millet-seed of thought. . . . I hope you will not find it a sad story as a whole, since it sets — or is intended to set — in a strong light the remedial influences of pure, natural human relations. The Nemesis is a very mild one. I have felt all through as if the story would have lent itself best to metrical rather than to prose fiction, especially in all that relates to the psychology of Silas; except that, under that treatment, there could not be an equal play of humor. It came to me first of all quite suddenly, as a sort of legendary tale, suggested by my recollection of having once, in early childhood, seen a linen-weaver with a bag on his back; but, as my mind dwelt on the subject, I became inclined to a more realistic treatment." On the 10th of March, 1861, "Silas Marner" was completed. It was received with much favor on its first publication, and it was generally accepted as quite the equal of her previous books in its plot and in its power as a story.

During the time it was writing, and before, there were frequent visits to the country for one or more weeks. Only in that way could the health be kept up to a point that permitted work to go on, for the bad health was chiefly owing to the depressing influence of town air and town scenes. For the sake

of a change of scene, and for the purpose of becoming more familiar with the proposed scene of the historical novel, she set out for Florence, in company with Lewes, on the 19th of April, and they remained there for about a month and a half. They had a "paradisiac journey" thither, and every phase of the city and its life was studied as carefully as time and health permitted. The city seemed far lovelier at this time than when first visited, and there was a fresh zeal in seeing the life it manifested. This delight in the city itself was mixed with a fear of not being able to make anything out of the proposed story. She had resolved never to write anything into which she could not put her whole heart; and the Florentine spirit had not yet taken possession of her. There were many days of illness to contend with, but she could write of Florence in these words to Charles Lewes: "I feel very full of thankfulness for all the creatures I have got to love — all the beautiful and great things that are given me to know; and I feel, too, much younger and more hopeful, as if a great deal of life and work were still before me. Pater and I have had great satisfaction in finding our impressions of admiration more than renewed in returning to Florence; and the things we cared about when we were here before seem even more worthy than they did in our memories. We have had delightful weather; and the evening lights on the Arno, the bridges, and the quaint houses, are a treat that we think of beforehand." When she had returned home it took a long time to get "Romola" under way. The story proposed did not take possession of her life, did not urge itself upon her for expression.

On the 12th of August she wrote in her diary: "Got into a state of so much wretchedness in attempting to concentrate my thoughts on the construction of my story that I became desperate, and suddenly burst my bonds, saying, I will not think of writing!" It was not given up, however; and on the 20th she conceived the plot with new distinctness. On the 4th of October her mind was still worried about the plot, and she was without any confidence in her ability to do what she wished. Finally, on the 7th of October the first chapter

was begun; but at the end of the month she was again utterly despondent about the book. On the 6th of November she was so utterly dejected that, in walking with Lewes, she almost resolved to give up the attempt to write an Italian novel. On the 10th her mind was brighter, and the subject presented new attractions. Walking in the morning sunshine on the 8th of December she told Lewes the plot of the story, and he expressed great delight. She still doubted if she should be able to carry out her ideas; for flashes of hope were succeeded by long periods of distrust. On the 12th she finished writing out the plot, which she re-wrote several times before beginning the book itself. On the 1st of January she wrote in her journal: "I began again my novel of Romola." On the last day of the month she again wrote: "It is impossible to me to believe that I have ever been in so unpromising and despairing a state as I now feel. After writing these words I read to George the Proem and opening scene of my novel, and he expressed great delight in them." There were trips into the country from time to time; but on the 2d of April only seventy-seven pages had been written. In May, however, it had progressed so far that she sold to the "Cornhill Magazine" the right of its first publication for £7000. Towards the end of the year the work went on more rapidly; but at the very last the old illness and fear came back again in full force. It was completed before the end of December; and with the beginning of the new year there are pleasant reports of its favorable reception. In after years she said that "Romola" ploughed into her more deeply than any of her other books. Its writing was a great effort, and it made a distinct mark in her life towards old age, and the loss of whatever of buoyancy of mind she had before. "I began it a young woman — I finished it an old woman," was her own remark concerning it. It was completed on the 9th of June, 1863, after she had spent nearly two years on it. The reception it had from the public was all that she could have desired. She did an immense amount of reading in preparation for it; and she endeavored in every way to make herself the master of the time in all its varied aspects

At the middle of June, after the completion of "Romola," a trip was taken to the Isle of Wight, with which she was much delighted. She was very happy in her holiday, being relieved from the long strain of writing, and she found a fresh charm in the hedgerow grasses and flowers. In August there was a visit to Worthing, and the friendship was made of Mrs. Julius Hare, whose death not long after George Eliot sincerely mourned. "The wide sky, the not London," she wrote from Worthing, "makes a new creature of me in half an hour. I wonder, then, why I am ever depressed — why I am so shaken by agitations. I come back to London, and again the air is full of demons." Her enjoyment of the country was very great, and she found delight in all its freshness and beauty. It revived her drooping spirits, took away her melancholy and her feeling of being incapable of good work, and made of her a new being. It was also necessary to her enjoyment of life that she should be within reach of the intellectual stimulus of the city, its libraries, its art collections, and its music. The result was a succession of periods of ill-health and discouragement, and a frequent rushing away into the country to get rid of them. Not six months passed without a visit to the country during her London residence. In this way only was she enabled to go on with her work, and to keep a fair degree of health.

In July, 1863, there was mentioned the project of buying The Priory, 21 North Bank, Regent's Park. On the 5th of November they went to live in this house. This was in accordance with a purpose long before formed of taking a house permanently as soon as it could be done with convenience. Mr. Lewes's three sons were now provided for, and a house that would give more of the feeling of home was desired. The Priory proved to be admirably adapted to their needs, with its pleasant interior, and its garden and trees without. George Eliot gave herself to the task of fitting it to their needs, and it soon became as homelike and attractive as they could wish. Owen Jones decorated the drawing-room, selected the furniture, and took unwearied pains that everything about them might be pretty. "He stayed two nights till after twelve

o'clock," she wrote, "that he might see every engraving hung in the right place; and as you know I care even more about the fact of kindness than its effects, you will understand that I enjoy being grateful for all this friendliness on our behalf. You would have liked to hear Jansa play on his violin, and you would perhaps have been amused to see an affectionate friend of yours splendid in a gray moire-antique — the consequence of a severe lecture from Owen Jones on her general neglect of personal adornment. I am glad to have got over this crisis of maternal and housekeeping duty. My soul never flourishes on attention to details which others manage quite gracefully without any conscious loss of power for wider thoughts and cares."

At this time she writes of indulging herself in being petted very much, enjoying great books, enjoying the new, quiet, and pretty home, and the study of Beethoven's sonatas for piano and violin with the mild-faced old Jansa, and not being at all unhappy. There was no project of a new book on foot, and her mind lay fallow for some months after the completion of "Romola." The first week in April, 1864, was spent in Scotland, and in May they started for Italy. Seven weeks only were they absent from home; but they went through Paris, Turin, and Milan, to Venice, where they spent two weeks, and returned through Padua, Verona, Brescia, and Milan on the way home. They crossed over the Alps by St. Gothard, and stayed a day or two at Lucerne. They were accompanied during most of this journey by Mr. Burton the artist, who proved a pleasant travelling companion. On the return home the old doubt and discouragement came back to her again. The change from the active life of a traveller to the quiet and inactivity of home was always too much for her health, and a time of depression followed. In her journal she wrote, under date of July 17: "Horrible scepticism about all things paralyzing my mind. Shall I ever be good for anything again? Ever do anything again?" The working days were not over, however; and on the 6th of September she records the beginning of another work, but with fear and trembling: "I am reading about Spain, and trying a drama on a subject that has

fascinated me — have written the prologue, and am beginning the first act. But I have little hope of making anything satisfactory." In September a trip was taken to Harrogate, Scarborough, and York Cathedral, and under this stimulus the poem went slowly on. The study of Spanish history and literature was taken up; but there came days of weakness and ennui, so that the effort at creation oppressed her mind sorely. Not until the end of December was the third act completed. The entry made in her journal of her thoughts at the closing of the year are characteristic of her, showing the hope and fear with which she constantly struggled. "With me the year has not been fruitful. I have written three acts of my drama, and am now in a condition of body and mind to make me hope for better things in the coming year. The last quarter has made an epoch for me, by the fact that, for the first time in my serious authorship, I have written verse. In each other we are happier than ever." At the beginning of the new year another poetical subject was taken up, and "My Vegetarian Friend" was written, which she also called "Utopias," but finally published as "A Minor Poet." This was the first poem which she completed. In January a visit was made to Paris, and it was greatly enjoyed. The most interesting sight she saw was Comte's dwelling. "Such places," she wrote, "that knew the great dead, always move me deeply; and I had an unexpected sight of interest in the photograph taken at the very last." This wintry expedition brightened her much.

Towards the end of February she was again ill and very miserable. Lewes took the poem away from her, feeling that she was worrying over it far too much. After writing half a dozen newspaper articles, she was once more busily employed on a new novel. This time she chose an English scene, and one connected with the earliest recollections of her childhood. Begun the last of March, she was going "doggedly to work" on it the last of July. In August an expedition of a few weeks was made into Brittany, where she found much to enjoy in the Norman churches, the great cathedrals at Le Mans, Tours, and Chartres, with their marvellous painted glass; and she thought them quite worth the scramble necessary to see them. In the

Autumn "Felix Holt" was again under way; but at the very end of the year she was "sticking in the mud," in doubt about its construction. Soon after, the first volume having been completed, the aid of Frederic Harrison was secured in regard to the legal aspects of the story. He was freely consulted in regard to it, and his advice obtained in relation to other points than those of law. She also took the utmost pains to get a true idea of the reform period of 1832, which she sketched in this novel. She went to the British Museum and consulted the files of the "Times" for the whole period, "to be sure of as many details as I could." In January she had "no confidence that the book would ever be worthily written;" but in April the first two volumes were sent to the publisher. There followed a trip to Dorking, and on the last day of May "Felix Holt" was completed, after days and nights of throbbing palpitation and nervous excitement. When it was off her hands she was a new creature at once.

On the 7th of June, 1866, they set out on an expedition to Holland, going first to Antwerp, thence to Rotterdam, the Hague, Leyden, Amsterdam, Cologne, and Coblentz. A fortnight was spent at Schwalbach, then they went down the Rhine to Bonn and on to Aix and Liège, and back by the way of Ghent, Bruges, and Ostend. From Ostend the passage home was very rough, and they suffered from it for many days. Twenty days after reaching home, on the 30th of August, "The Spanish Gypsy" was once more taken up, and the reading of Spanish books was begun again. "Now I read it again," she wrote to Frederic Harrison, "I felt it impossible to abandon it; the conceptions move me deeply, and they have never been wrought out before. There is not a thought or symbol that I do not long to use: but the whole requires recasting; and, as I never recast anything before, I think of the issue very doubtfully. When one has to work out the dramatic action for one's self, under the inspiration of an idea, instead of having a grand myth or an Italian novel ready to one's hand, one feels anything but omnipotent. Not that I should have done any better if I had had the myth or novel, for I am not a good user of opportunities. I think I have the right

locus and historic conditions, but much else is wanting." The actual work of rewriting was begun October 15, but there was a visit to Tunbridge in the early days of December. On the 11th of that month they set out for Paris, and thence proceeded to Spain after a brief period.

The three days spent in Paris had their attraction in the companionship of Madame Mohl, Professor Scherer, Jules Simon, and Ernest Renan. She breakfasted with Renan, whose appearance she described as something between the Catholic priest and the Dissenting minister. "His manners are very amiable, his talk pleasant, but not distinguished," was her description of him to one of her correspondents. From Paris the travellers proceeded to Bairritz, where she enjoyed the transcendent natural beauties, and where she found new interest in the reading of Comte. They spent the days in walking and in reading the "Politique," especially devoting the mornings to the study of the great philosopher. "That morning study," she wrote, "keeps me in a state of enthusiasm through the day — a moral glow, which is a sort of *milieu subjectif* for the sublime sea and sky."

Then they proceeded to San Sebastian and to Barcelona, and they had perfect weather, blue skies, and a warm sun, in all which she took much delight. Proceeding through Aragon and Catalonia, they visited Granada, Cordova, and Seville. She found none of the stories of book-makers concerning the discomforts of Spanish travel to be true, and she got a great deal of pleasure out of the journey. "We have had a glorious journey," was the unwonted enthusiasm with which she described it.

She returned home with new zeal for her work, and wrote in her journal, "I go to my poem and the construction of two prose works — if possible." The main object of the journey into Spain was the securing of a local coloring for the dramatic poem which she now proposed to complete. She felt the old mistrust of her own powers, and all the more so in this case, as the kind of work she proposed was new to her. She was impelled to go on with it, however, for the impulse of creation was too strong for her doubt, and always mastered it

in the end. Soon after her return to The Priory she wrote of the poem to her publisher: "The work connected with Spain is not a romance. It is —prepare your fortitude — it is — a poem. I conceived the plot, and wrote nearly the whole as a drama in 1864. Mr. Lewes advised me to put it by for a time and take it up again, with a view of recasting it. I need not tell you that I am not hopeful, but I am quite sure the subject is fine. It is not historic, but has merely historic connections. The plot was wrought out entirely as an incorporation of my own ideas. Of course, if it is ever finished to my satisfaction, it is not a work for us to get money by; but Mr. Lewes urges and insists that it shall be done."

As in the case of her first novel, it needed all the encouragement which Lewes could give to induce her to go on with the work she had undertaken, against the constant feeling of doubt concerning her own powers. Under the pressure of this distrust she worked slowly and with much hesitation. In July a flight was made to North Germany, chiefly to Dresden; but they also visited Ilmenau, Berlin, Cassel, and Hanover. During this trip the poem was making progress, and in December it was put into type so far as written. She was anxious to be able to judge of it as it would appear in print, but equally anxious that no word of it should come to the public. Her whole life was wrapped up in the work she had in hand, but she also had a critical desire that it should be made as perfect as possible before publication. She could only work while her mind was in a glow with her subject; and when the ardor of creation was gone her own work seemed like that of some other person. It is this fact which makes the following words to John Blackwood full of interest: "The theory of laying by poems for nine years may be a fine one, but it could not answer for me to apply it. I could no more live through one of my books a second time than I can live through last year again. But I like to keep checks on myself, and not to create external temptations to do what I should think foolish in another." The fresh and stirring interest of the moment was necessary with her to the accomplishment of the best things in literature.

In her journal she recorded from time to time the progress of "The Spanish Gypsy," and at the end of the year she wrote to her publisher: "Mr. Lewes is in an unprecedented state of delight with the poem, now that he is reading it with close care. He says that he is astonished that he can't find more faults. He is especially pleased with the sense of variety it gives; and this testimony is worth the more because he urged me to put the poem by (in 1865) on the ground of monotony. He is really exultant about it now." She also wrote to her publisher wise instructions about the publication of the book, that it should at first be announced simply as "a poem," and then, a little later, by its title. In March of 1868 there was a few weeks' visit to Torquay, and she returned home with the fourth book of the poem completed. Throughout the time of its composition she depended constantly on the sympathy and advice of her husband, and at the middle of April she mentions a great change in the plot, which he had suggested. "The poem will be less tragic than I threatened: Mr. Lewes has prevailed on me to return to my original conception, and give up the additional development, which I determined on subsequently. The poem is rather shorter in consequence. Don't you think that my artistic deference and pliability deserve that it should also be better in consequence? I now end it as I determined to end it when I first conceived the story." It is probable, though we do not know the second proposed ending, that the interference of Lewes was wise.

On the 29th of April "The Spanish Gypsy" was completed. In some notes made on the origin and purpose of the poem she says it was suggested by an Annunciation, supposed to be by Titian. This small picture hangs in the Scuola di' San Rocco at Venice, and it acted merely as a hint to a train of thought on the law of sacrifice and renunciation. "It occurred to me that here was a great dramatic motive of the same class as those used by the Greek dramatists, yet specifically differing from them. A young maiden, believing herself to be on the eve of the chief event in her life — marriage — about to share in the ordinary lot of womanhood, full of young hope, has suddenly announced to her that she is chosen to

fulfil a great destiny, entailing a terribly different experience from that of ordinary womanhood. She is chosen, not by any momentary arbitrariness, but as a result of foregoing hereditary conditions: she obeys." It was this line of thought, suggested by the little picture, which she returned home with from Venice, and it possessed her mind until it had been worked out into the poem.

In endeavoring to find a fitting historic setting for this idea, she was led to think that the moment in Spanish history when the struggle with the Moors had reached its climax, and when the Gypsies were making an effort in behalf of their own race, presented the best opportunities for working out the germinal thought of the poem. These conditions produced the racial claim which was to destroy the purposes of the individual, and thus gave the tragedy of the work. The claim of fidelity to social pledges, the great claim which humanity has upon us to obey its law of help, is the thought which runs through the poem and gives it purpose. The struggle which grows out of the conflict of this purpose with the common ends of life constitutes its tragic element. In her own words of interpretation, "Silva presents the tragedy of entire rebellion; Fedalma of a grand submission, which is rendered vain by the effects of Silva's rebellion; Zarca, the struggle for a great end, rendered vain by the surrounding conditions of life."

She "only expected the unfavorable" in regard to the reception of her poem by the public. Having an established reputation as a novelist, a new claim on public regard she feared would be established only with difficulty, and she prepared her mind for failure. Happily the poem was favorably received, and in that fact she found courage for more poetic writing in the near future.

Having completed her task, the next two months were spent in a trip to Baden. On this, as on all other similar occasions, she went in the company of her husband. Only once or twice during the years they lived together did either take a journey without the other, and these were on purposes of business, and not in search of enjoyment or health. They went by the way of Dover, Bonn, and Frankfort, to Baden, where they spent

nine days, then to Petersthal for three weeks, and home by the way of Freiburg, Interlaken, and Paris. The two months were "spent delightfully in seeing fresh natural beauties, and with the occasional cheering influence of kind people." In September there was an "extremely agreeable" visit to Yorkshire for the sake of seeing two or three intimate friends. November brought a journey to Sheffield, and a recognition there of places she had seen in her father's company thirty years before. "We enjoyed our journey to the North," she wrote to Madame Bodichon. "It was a great experience to me to see the stupendous iron-works at Sheffield; and then, for variety, we went to the quiet and beauty of Matlock, and I recognized all the spots I had carried in my memory for more than five-and-twenty years. I drove through that region with my father when I was a young girl — not very full of hope about my woman's future. I am one of those perhaps exceptionable people whose early, childish dreams were much less happy than the real outcome of life." During the last days of the year she records the popularity of "The Spanish Gypsy," and rejoices in this fact because it is a testimony to the worth of positivism. On the last day of the year she made her customary statement in her journal of what the year had done for her. This record has more of hope in it than on other occasions of a like nature; but there is the same close self-inspection and yearning after the higher results of life. "It has been as rich in blessings as any preceding year of our double life, and I enjoy a more and more even cheerfulness and continually increasing power of dwelling on the good that is given to me and dismissing the thought of small evils. I have perhaps gained a little higher ground and firmer footing in some studies, notwithstanding the yearly loss of retentive power. We have made some new friendships that cheer us with the sense of new admiration of actual living beings whom we know in the flesh, and who are kindly disposed towards us. And we have no real trouble. I wish we were not in a minority of our fellow-men. I desire no added blessing for the coming year but this — that I may do some good, lasting work, and make both my outward and inward habits less

imperfect — that is, more directly tending to the best uses of life."

With the beginning of 1869 she wrote in her journal that she had set for herself many tasks during the year. "I wonder how many will be accomplished? — a novel called Middlemarch, a long poem on Timoleon, and several minor poems." The success of "The Spanish Gypsy" led her to write more and more in verse, and it was but a few weeks before she had completed "Agatha" and "How Lisa loved the King." During the first week in March they set out on an Italian journey which lasted nine weeks. In that time they went through France to Marseilles, along the Cornice to Spezia, then to Pisa, Florence, Naples, Rome, Assisi, Perugia, Florence again, Ravenna, Bologna, Verona; across the Brenner Pass to Munich; then to Paris *via* Strasburg. Her health was the worst it had ever been on any of her journeys, but she found much interest in renewing old memories and recording new ones.

A few weeks after their return home Mr. Lewes's son Thornton arrived from Natal wasted away with an incurable disease, the result of an injury he sustained years before. He was carefully nursed through many months of growing weakness until his death. The letters of George Eliot at this time are full of her interest in this young man, and of the sorrow she felt at beholding his sufferings. During the summer "Middlemarch" was begun, and there were two or three visits to the country. In October Thornton Lewes died, and immediately after they went into the quietest and most beautiful part of Surrey, four miles and a half from any railway station. "I was very much shaken in mind and body," she wrote to Sara Hennell, "and nothing but the deep calm of fields and woods would have had a beneficent effect on me. We both of us felt, more than ever before, the blessedness of being in the country, and we are come back much restored."

During the opening days of 1870 "The Legend of Jubal" was written. In the spring there was a revisit of Berlin and Vienna, which lasted for eight weeks. They met Mommsen, Bunsen, and Du Bois Reymond, and she received much attention. She did not enjoy the distinctions given to a literary

celebrity, and so wrote to Mrs. Congreve: "If I had been in good health I should probably have continued to be more amused than tired of sitting on a sofa and having one person after another brought up to bow to me, and pay me the same compliment. Even as it was, I felt my heart go out to some good women who seemed really to have an affectionate feeling towards me for the sake of my books. But the sick animal longs for quiet and darkness." On her return home she wrote in her journal of continued and growing bodily ailment: "My health is in an uncomfortable state, and I seem to be all the weaker for the continual depression produced by cold and sore throat, which stretched itself all through our journey. These small bodily grievances make life less desirable to me, though every one of my best blessings — my one perfect love, and the sympathy shown towards me for the sake of my works, and the personal regard of a few friends — have become much intensified in these latter days. I am not hopeful about future work. I am languid, and my novel languishes too. But to-morrow may be better than to-day." Bodily infirmity increased upon her with every year, and there was less of courage and hope with which to meet it. There came longer and still longer periods of unproductivity, and more frequent journeys in the search of rest and fresh vitality.

After only a few days at home there was a visit to Oxford to hold converse with friends and to see the University. They spent a few days with the Rev. Mark Pattison, and they met Jowett, Rawlinson, Brodie, and other professors. The health of Lewes giving way, there were more flittings into the country, first to Cromer, then to Harrogate and Whitby. Health not being found at these places of resort, the Surrey retreat at Limpsfield was again sought out. She found it an earthly paradise; and there they enjoyed again their old habit of walking and reading. The country rest enabled her to complete "Armgart," which had been commenced a little before. These many wanderings made her return home full of new satisfaction; and there came a longing for a settled habitation, and a peaceful pursuit of uninterrupted days. "To me the most desirable thing just now seems to be to have one home,

and stay there till death comes to take me away. I get more and more disinclined to the perpetual makeshifts of a migratory life, and care more and more for the order and habitual objects of home. However, there are many in the world whose whole existence is a makeshift, and perhaps the formula which would fit the largest number of lives is 'a doing without, more or less patiently.'"

During this year "Middlemarch," at first called "Miss Brooke," was begun; but the progress made was very slow, only about a hundred pages being written at the end of the year. At Christmas they visited Ryde, on the Isle of Wight, where their friend Madame Bodichon was spending a few weeks. "We had a pleasant and healthy visit, walking much in the frosty air," she wrote of it on her return home. All through these months of 1870 her heart went out in sympathy for the suffering caused by the Franco-Prussian war; and her correspondence shows how much she felt the importance of the conflict that was being carried on with such energy. At first her sympathies were with the Germans, and she wrote strong words of the selfishness of the French, who made war simply for glory. As the war went on, and the relentless Prussian armies laid waste so much of France, she felt the bitter cruelty of war, even for a righteous cause. "No people can carry on a long, fierce war without being brutalized by it," she wrote, "more or less, and it pains me that the educated voices have not a higher moral tone about national and international duties and prospects. But, like every one else, I feel that the war is too much for me, and am rather anxious to avoid unwise speech about it than to utter what may seem to me to be wisdom. The pain is that one can *do* so little."

With the return of spring bodily depression came on once more, "chiefly languor and occasionally positive ailments." The result was, that on the first of May they went into Surrey to Shottermill, where the whole of the summer was spent. Here they took a queer cottage of Mrs. Anne Gilchrist, who edited her husband's biography of William Blake and wrote a life of Mary Lamb. The cold summer was not health-inspiring to George Eliot, and she suffered much from the

want of sunshine and warmth. Otherwise the summer was full of delight; and she gave a happy picture of the manner in which she spent her time: "We enjoy our roomy house and pretty lawn greatly. Imagine me seated near a window, opening under a veranda, with flowers and lawn and pretty hills in sight, my feet on a warm-water bottle, and my writing on my knees. In that attitude my mornings are passed. We dine at two; and at four, when the tea comes in, I begin to read aloud. About six or half-past we walk on to the commons and see the great sky over our head. At eight we are usually in the house again, and fill our evening with physics, chemistry, or other wisdom, if our heads are at par; if not, we take to folly, in the shape of Alfred de Musset's poems, or something akin to them." To Lewes renewed health had come, and he was very busy with his physiological and other kindred studies, and in the writing of his system of philosophy. "George is gloriously well," she wrote, "and studying, writing, walking, eating, and sleeping with equal vigor. He is enjoying life here immensely. Our country could hardly be surpassed in its particular kind of beauty — perpetual undulation of heath and copse, and clear views of running water, with here and there a grand pine wood, steep, wood-clothed promontories, and gleaming pools." To another friend she gave an account of other aspects of their life in this happy retreat: "We have a ravishing country round us, and pure air and water; in short, all the conditions of health, if the east wind were away. We have old prints for our dumb companions — charming children of Sir Joshua's, and large-hatted ladies of his and Romney's. I read aloud — almost all the evening — books of German science, and other gravities. So, you see, we are like two secluded owls, wise with unfashionable wisdom, and knowing nothing of pictures and French plays." Had the measure of health been good, this ought to have been a productive summer, under such conditions. But alas! for a weak body, when the brain must suffer from its debility. "Middlemarch" went on with something more of energy than before, however, during the summer; but in the autumn there was an illness of two months. Only on the first of December was the first part pub

lished, and at that time the fourth part had not yet been completed. In December there were three weeks more of illness; but the favor with which the first part of "Middlemarch" was received helped to give her the energy for going on with her work. At the end of January the fourth part was completed and the second published; and in February she wrote: "Things are encouraging, and the voices that reach us are enthusiastic." In May she wrote these words in her journal: "The reception of the book hitherto has been quite beyond what I could have believed beforehand, people exalting it above everything else I have written."

During the last of May a retreat in Surrey was again sought out, but this time the place of it was not revealed to her friends. To one of them she wrote: "We have been enjoying our hiding-place about twelve days now, and I am enjoying it more and more — getting more bodily ease and mental clearness than I have had for the last six months. Our house is not in the least beautiful, but it is well situated and comfortable, perfectly still in the midst of a garden surrounded by fields and meadows, and yet within reach of shops and civilization." There were frequent visits to the city, but the country was kept to throughout the summer. The days went by in delicious peace, unbroken except by the little inward anxieties of authorship. "Middlemarch" was completed in August, and there immediately followed a flitting to Germany for the autumn. They were absent six weeks, spending the time at Homburg, Stuttgart, Augsburg, and one or two other cities, returning home by the way of Paris. On their return she wrote hopeful words of the health of Mr. Lewes, and of her own added strength.

In December the publication of "Middlemarch" was completed, it having been issued in monthly parts. She expressed in her journal the deep satisfaction which its success gave her. "No former book of mine," she wrote, "has been received with more enthusiasm — not even 'Adam Bede;' and I have received many deeply affecting assurances of its influence for good on individual minds. Hardly anything could have happened to me which I could regard as a greater blessing than

the growth of my spiritual existence when my bodily existence is decaying." As she grew older it took a period of greater and greater length after the completion of a book before her mind began to store the treasures of another. The growing power her books brought her did not increase the enthusiasm of creation, and she had to wait for some fresh impulse to form in her mind. In the earlier years of her authorship several works were crowding upon her attention at once, but now it was many months before there is any indication of new creative activities.

In May there was a visit to Cambridge, at the invitation of Frederic Myers, and there she greatly enjoyed talking with a number of the University men. In June there was a visit to Professor Jowett at Oxford. On the 23d of June they set out on a nine weeks' ramble in France and Germany. "We were both shattered," she wrote, "and needed quiet rather than the excitement of seeing friends and acquaintances — an excitement of which we had been having too much at home — so we turned aside by easy stages to the Vosges, and spent about three weeks at Plombières and Luxeuil. We shall carry home many pleasant memories of our journey — of Fontainebleau, for example, which I had never seen before. Then of the Vosges, where we count on going again. Erckmann-Chatrian's books had been an introduction to the lovely region; and several of them were our companions there." On account of the heat they turned north to Frankfort, spent a week at Homburg, and returned home by easy stages through Metz, Verdun, Rheims, and Amiens. They went at once, on reaching England at the end of August, to Blackbrook, in Surrey.

They had long been planning to buy a country house, and perhaps even permanently leaving the city. The house at Blackbrook soon proved not to be suitable to their purpose, though its tall trees, beautiful lawn, and invigorating air had many attractions for them. "I am rather ashamed of our grumblings," she wrote to a friend in October. "We are really enjoying the country, and have more than our share of everything. George has happy mornings at his desk now, and we have fine bracing air to walk in — air which I take in as a sort

of nectar. We like the bits of scenery about us better and better as we get them by heart in our walks and drives. The house, with all its defects, is very pretty, and more delightfully secluded, without being remote from the conveniences of the world, than any place we have before thought of as a possible residence for us." With great reluctance she returned to the city in the autumn, because she thoroughly enjoyed the country, and because the distractions of the city wore upon her time and her spirits alike. "In the country," she said, "the days have broad spaces, and the very stillness seems to give a delightful roominess to the hours."

In November there began to be thoughts of a new novel, but the favor with which "Middlemarch" continued to be received made her feel doubtful of how any other book of hers might be accepted by the public. Yet her mind was only "slowly simmering" towards it, and the real work of the winter was the preparation of the "Legend of Jubal, and other Poems," which was published in May. She wrote "A College Breakfast Party" at this time, but her health throughout the winter was a "wretched drag" on any literary efforts of a sustained kind. The flitting to Earlswood in May brought at once more of courage and a new bodily activity. She wrote in June of the good already experienced in soul and body "from the sweet breezes over hill and common, the delicious silence, and the unbroken spaces of the day." The neighborhood was so lovely they even thought of settling there, but the wide common was very breezy, and the wind made mournful music about the walls. As the summer went on the winds were found to be far too keen, though she could write in June: "I am flourishing now, and am brewing my future big book with more or less (generally less) belief in the quality of the liquor which will be drawn off." October was spent in visiting friends and in a journey to Paris, after which The Priory was returned to for the winter. Her words written at the end of the year were almost a repetition of those of former years. They expressed her sense of thankfulness for the affection which had been given her, and her doubt of being able to make the work she was engaged on a fit contribution to literature.

In the spring of 1875 a country house was taken in Herts. That region did not prove favorable to her health, and she complained of its bad effects on her to all her correspondents.

"Of me you must expect no good," she wrote to Mr. Cross. "I have been in a piteous state of debility in body and depression in mind. My book seems to me so unlikely ever to be finished in a way that will make it worth giving to the world, that it is a kind of glass in which I behold my infirmities." The book went on with more of depression about its success than in the case of any other book she had written except "Romola." It was read with the strongest approval by Lewes and Blackwood, and this encouraged her to continue it with more of vigor and resolution. Its publication was begun in February of 1876, and at once expressions of approval began to come to her. In April she wrote in her journal: "The success of the work at present is greater than that of 'Middlemarch' up to the corresponding point of publication. What will be the feeling of the public as the story advances I am entirely doubtful. The Jewish element seems to me likely to satisfy nobody. I am in rather better health — having, perhaps, profited by some eight days' change at Weybridge." In June "Daniel Deronda" was completed, and she mentions the great amount of attention it received from the reading public. In her journal and in her letters she records the approval accorded to the book by the Jews, and the condemnation with which it was read on the part of many Christians. Her own feelings on the subject are best expressed in a letter to Mrs. H. B. Stowe: "As to the Jewish element in 'Deronda,' I expected from first to last, in writing it, that it would create much stronger resistance, and even repulsion, than it has actually met with. But precisely because I felt that the usual attitude of Christians towards Jews is,— I hardly know whether to say more impious or more stupid when viewed in the light of their professed principles, — I therefore felt urged to treat Jews with such sympathy and understanding as my nature and knowledge could attain to. Moreover, not only towards the Jews, but towards all Oriental peoples with whom we English come in contact, a spirit of arrogance and con-

temptuous dictatorialness is observable which has become a national disgrace to us. There is nothing I should care more to do, if it were possible, than to arouse the imagination of men and women to a vision of human claims in those races of their fellow-men who most differ from them in customs and beliefs. But towards the Hebrews we western people, who have been reared in Christianity, have a peculiar debt, and, whether we acknowledge it or not, a peculiar thoroughness of fellowship in religious and moral sentiment. Can anything be more disgusting than to hear people called 'educated' making small jokes about eating ham, and showing themselves empty of any real knowledge as to the relation of their own social and religious life to the history of the people they think themselves witty in insulting? They hardly know that Christ was a Jew. And I find men, educated, supposing that Christ spoke Greek. To my feeling, this deadness to the history which has prepared half our world for us, this inability to find interest in any form of life that is not clad in the same coat-tails and flounces as our own, lies very close to the worst kind of irreligion. The best that can be said of it is, that it is a sign of the intellectual narrowness — in plain English, the stupidity — which is still the average mark of our culture."

The sale of the book was greater than in the case of any of its predecessors, and she took the deepest satisfaction in the interest it awakened. It was written from the full force of her intellectual and religious convictions, and with an artistic purpose as lofty as was possible to her creative genius. Probably no book she wrote came more entirely out of the best blood of her heart or with a more sincere desire for the helping of mankind.

In December a house was bought in Surrey, The Heights, at Witley, near Godalming, and in March they went to it for the summer. It stands on a hill in the midst of green fields, with a dozen acres of pleasure grounds immediately about it. It afforded abundant walks and drives, and in the neighborhood were several families to which they were attached. In November, just after returning to The Priory, she wrote: "We are in love with our Surrey house, and only regret that it hardly

promises to be snug enough for us chilly people through the winter, so that we dare not think of doing without the warmer nest in town." She returned to the city with renewed health, and with a bodily comfort not known before in several years. The health of Mr. Lewes was not so good as usual, and on the return to Witley the following spring it did not recruit. He suffered severely through the summer, and their life was more than in former years one of seclusion and rest. Soon after their return to the city he was taken alarmingly ill, lingered for a few days, and died November 28, 1878. She took great comfort in the thought that "he never knew he was dying, and fell gently asleep after ten days of illness, in which the suffering was comparatively mild." The death of Lewes was a great blow to George Eliot. She had long trusted to him completely for guidance in all the practical matters of life, and he had been a steadfast support to her in her literary work. She was of a self-distrusting nature, had great need for the sympathy of others, and had strength for life only when the affection of those about her was warm and tender. In all ways he was to her a support, and a most intimate companion. Their life had been inseparable in their journeys, in the books they read, in the thoughts they entertained, and in the sympathetic companionship of their work as authors. Every page of her books was submitted to him for approval; and she was always more zealous for the success of his books than for her own.

She wrote in her journal on the first day of 1879, "Here I and sorrow sit." The grief was overwhelming, and all the worth of life seemed to her to be gone. She saw no one but Charles Lewes for many weeks, except the very few persons she was obliged to converse with on business. This absorbing sorrow soon began to tell on her health; but she found some recuperation in the thought of editing her husband's books and endowing a scholarship in his memory. This work almost at once began to absorb her mind, and it grew more and more to be the one thought of her life during this period. To one intimate friend she wrote: "I am a bruised creature, and shrink even from the tenderest touch." To another she wrote of the

sorrow which had broken her life, and to yet another that her everlasting winter had set in. She did not go outside the gate of her own house, and she "could not bear to go out of sight of the things he used and looked on." At the beginning of February she was entirely occupied with his manuscripts, and unable to contemplate the thought of going away from the immediate presence and help of his books. "I want to live a little time," she wrote to Mr. Cross, "that I may do certain things for his sake. So I try to keep up my strength, and I work as much as I can to keep my mind from imbecility. But that is all at present. I can go through anything that is mere business. But what used to be joy is joy no longer, and what is pain is easier because he has not to bear it."

In March she saw Henry Sidgwick and others in regard to founding a scholarship to the memory of her husband, which purpose was soon carried out. The scholarship is open to either sex, to students anywhere in England, and is for original investigation in physiology. She took much delight in this project, and was greatly rejoiced when a competent young man was found who needed the aid it offered. The other purpose, of editing her husband's books, also went steadily on, with the aid of his scientific friends: and she gave to the world all of his work that he had in any degree completed before his death.

During his last illness, on one of the days when his health seemed to be improving, Lewes sent to Blackwood a new volume by George Eliot. The death of her husband, for the time being, took from her all interest in its publication, and she refused to have it appear at once. "To me, now, the writing seems all trivial stuff;" and three months after her husband's death she wrote: "It would be intolerable to my feelings to have a book of my writing brought out for a long time to come." Gradually she entered upon the task of correcting the proof-sheets; but she was anxious it should be announced that the book was written before his death. Her scruples were so far overcome that "Theophrastus Such" was published in May. In March she had felt so dissatisfied with it as to propose to wholly rewrite it at her leisure; but the assurances of

Blackwood as to its merit finally persuaded her to retreat from this purpose. The warm reception it met with from the public surprised her, and it gave her a little fresh hold upon the interests of life. She wrote to her publisher that it was really welcomed by the public; and she expressed the opinion that it was not composed of chips any more than her other books.

In April she began to see her friends again, and her correspondence with her old friends was all renewed. On the 22d she went to Witley, on a "lovely mild day;" but her health grew worse rather than better. During June and July she suffered much pain, and was seldom able to get out of the house, being almost confined to her bed for much of the time. In the autumn her health greatly improved, and towards the end of November she wrote to Sara Hennell: "I am quite recovered from the ailment which made me good for little in the summer, and indeed am stronger than I ever expected to be again. People are very good to me, and I am exceptionally blessed in many ways; but more blessed are the dead who rest from their labors, and have not to dread a barren, useless survival." She slowly resumed the old habits of her life; but the deep sorrow remained.

After the death of her husband, the friend she most fully trusted was John Walter Cross. He offered her his sympathy and help, they studied Italian together, read their favorite authors to each other, and went occasionally to concerts during the winter. In the spring their marriage was decided on, but after much hesitation on her part. She had known him for many years, and had found in him a valuable friend. They first met in Italy, and the families had gradually been drawn into intimate friendship. They lived in the same neighborhood in Surrey, and there was much of visiting between them. He was twenty years younger than she, but that made his affection and tenderness all the more delightful to her. She needed some one to lean on, to confide in, and to give her courage in the struggle of life. The admiration and devotion of a young man were not to have been expected, and all the more helpful were they when they came. Soon after their engagement she wrote to his sister: "Without your tenderness

I do not believe it would have been possible for me to accept this wonderful renewal of my life. Nothing less than the prospect of being loved and welcomed by you all could have sustained me. But now I cherish the thought that the family life will be the richer, and not the poorer, through your brother's great gift of love to me. Yet I quail a little in facing what has to be gone through — the hurting of many whom I care for You are doing everything you can to help me, and I am full of gratitude to you all for his sake as well as my own. The springs of affection are reopened in me, and it will make me better to be among you — more loving and trusting." To Charles Lewes she wrote after the marriage had taken place, and with confidence in his approval of the step she had taken: "Marriage has seemed to restore me to my old self. I was getting hard, and if I had decided differently, I should have become very selfish." To this may be added the words sent to one of her most intimate and oldest friends: "His family welcome me with the utmost tenderness. All this is wonderful blessing falling to me beyond my share, after I had thought that my life was ended, and that, so to speak, my coffin was ready for me in the next room. Deep down below there is a hidden river of sadness, but this must always be with those who have lived long — and I am able to enjoy my newly reopened life. I shall be a better, more loving creature than I could have been in solitude. To be constantly, lovingly grateful for the gift of a perfect love is the best illumination of one's mind to all the possible good there may be in store for man on this troublous little planet."

There need be no other explanation of her marriage than is contained in these words of her own. She was very sad and lonely, and a young man found her a delightful companion, and chose to devote his life to her. Needing affection and sympathy, she accepted his love, and found new life and hope in it. Her last days were brightened by this experience, and the few more months of life were made as happy as was possible. Whether she should accept the proffered affection, or keep wholly true to the old love, it was hers to decide. No theory of ideal love can determine such a case of personal ex-

perience. She believed it was better for her to take the fresh devotion and affection given her than to grow hard and selfish in her loneliness; and the verdict to be rendered concerned her alone.

They were married May 6, 1880, in St. George's Church, Hanover Square, in the presence of his family and one or two friends. She was given away by Charles Lewes. They at once crossed over to France, and passed thence, after visiting one or two places, to Italy. Her health immediately improved on reaching the Continent, and she was able to enjoy the walking and sight-seeing with much of delight. They went to Milan, Verona, Padua, and Venice. In the last city Mr. Cross was taken ill from the effects of the hot weather and the bad air, and as soon as he recovered they turned northwards. Some days were spent at Innspruck, Munich, Wildbad, and in other German cities. They reached Witley again on the 26th of July, and a few days later she wrote: "I have been amazingly well through all the exertion of our travels, and in the latter half of the time have done a great deal of walking." In the autumn there were visits to his relatives, and a return of the old disorder. Quite in the spirit of the old days, she wrote of the state of her health, and of her thankfulness for the affection that was being given to her: "I have been much more ill, and have only, during the last few days, begun to feel myself recovering strength. But I have been cared for with something much better than angelic tenderness. The fine, clear air, if it lasts, will induce us to linger in the country; and, indeed, I am not yet quite fit to move; for, though I appear to be quite cured of my main ailment, half my bodily self has vanished. We are having deliciously clear days here, and I get out for short drives and walks." To Mrs. Bray she wrote of the "miraculous affection which had chosen to watch over" her.

On the 3d of December they moved to Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, to a house which Mr. Cross had taken there. They waited in the country that it might be put in order for them, and that her books and furniture might be removed. She wrote to one friend of the cares of the house, and bad visits from one or

two of her friends. The old habits of reading in the company of her husband were resumed, and the authors were Max Müller, Goethe, Tennyson, Cervantes, and Myers's "Wordsworth." On the 17th of December, she went to hear the "Agamemnon" presented by the under-graduates of Oxford, and the next day she attended a popular concert at St. James's Hall. The room was very warm, and she caught a cold. That evening she played on the piano with her usual skill and spirit. On Sunday her throat was slightly troubled, but there was a pleasant call from Herbert Spencer, and from others. In the afternoon she began a letter, which was left unfinished on her desk. On Monday she was worse, and by Wednesday it was found that she was most seriously ill. In the evening of the latter day, as the physicians were by her bedside, she whispered to her husband, "Tell them I have great pain in the left side." She soon became unconscious, and passed away in that state, in the evening of December 22, 1880. She was buried on the 29th in Highgate Cemetery, in the midst of a bitter storm of sleet and snow, a service being read over her grave by the Rev. Dr. Sadler.

Shortly before her death George Eliot had selected and revised such of her "Westminister Review" articles as she cared to have rescued from oblivion; and she gave strict injunctions that no others should be republished. In 1884 these essays, with a few miscellaneous notes on a variety of topics, were published under the editorial supervision of Charles Lewes. In 1885 her letters, arranged in the form of a biography, were published by Mr. Cross. He showed great skill and modesty in doing his work, making one of the best of biographies. In preparing it, however, he used his materials to suit his own ideas of what should be given to the world, and no one of her letters appears in its entirety. This leaves something of doubt about what she did actually say and write on many important occasions. The very parts omitted might have given a quite different view of her life, and her habits of thought, had they been retained. The "Life" is also singularly silent about some of the most critical passages in George Eliot's life, especially concerning her relations to Mr. Lewes.

Her letters indicate how deep was her affection for him; but they do not give any real explanation of the fact of her living with him for many years without a legal marriage.

The biography prepared by Mr. Cross makes it very certain that George Eliot was herself greater than any of her books. It was a full and deep life she lived, in warm sympathy with the largest thought of her time, and in intimate fellowship with the leading scientific and literary minds among her contemporaries. More fully than any other author of her day she reflected the scientific spirit of the latter half of the nineteenth century. She was singularly devoid of prejudices, and was of a wide-minded and tolerant spirit, and eager to do what good she could for her fellows. A radical of the most pronounced type in some of her opinions, her sympathies were conservative, and there was nothing iconoclastic about her. Her mind was large and catholic in all its tendencies. She had much of affection and sympathy also, and thoroughly felt that the life of the affections is man's greatest heritage.

The trait in her character which must first of all demand attention as explanatory of her life was her self-distrust. The sorrow of her youth, and her slowness of development as an author, are to be accounted for by this fact. She had nothing of that self-reliance which Emerson preached so earnestly as the chief worth of life. She shrank from all thrusting forward of her own powers, and she does not seem to have realized her genius until it was found out by others. The ambition of mental power she had in youth, and the inward burning purpose to make herself known to the world, but her modesty and her fear kept her long in waiting before she found her true work. The sadness which has been so often complained of in her books was of the same kind, and grew out of the same roots of constitutional depression and want of faith. She saw the sad side of life and felt the agony it brings upon the heart, not out of any deliberate intellectual purpose, but because of her self-distrust and her natural sadness of disposition. She had a strong mind, and one of great intellectual capacities; but she had a woman's tenderness and craving for affection. However great her sympathy with the

readers of scientific opinion, she was a being of feeling, and cared more for those spiritual affinities which relate soul to soul than for aught else she found in her study of human life.

The element of self-distrust in her life expressed itself in her constant fear of what might be said about her by the critics. It was not that she dreaded any truth spoken of her, but the general tendency of reading criticisms on her works was to cause depression of mind and discouragement about her writing. For this reason she seldom read anything that was said about her books, Mr. Lewes reading the reviews for her; and he showed her only those which were likely to give her encouragement by their wise appreciation. He also conducted most of her business correspondence, and all of it which it was in his power to manage for her.

In a note to Sara Hennell, written in 1872, she said: "Mr. Lewes makes a martyr of himself in writing all my notes and business letters. Is not that being a sublime husband? For all the while there are studies of his own being put aside — studies which are a seventh heaven to him." At the very beginning of her career as a novelist she gave expression to her dislike of criticism, and this feeling grew rather than lessened. "It is a wretched weakness of my nature," she wrote to Blackwood, "to be so strongly affected by these things; and yet how is it possible to put one's best heart and soul into a book and be hardened to the result — be indifferent to the proof whether or not one has really a vocation to speak to one's fellow-men in that way? Of course one's vanity is at work; but the main anxiety is something entirely distinct from vanity." It was not true criticism, however, which she disliked, but the gossip and noise of men who did not choose to understand a book before writing about it. Those who could point out errors or help her to make her books more correct and truthful in any particular she always welcomed.

With all her self-distrust and her dislike of contact with the business part of the making of books, she had a sharp eye to the manner in which her books were published. She was anxious that they should be given to the public in the best

manner; but she never coveted the making of money from them, merely for the sake of money. What is more interesting about her writing, however, is the fact that she felt that she wrote under the impulse of a controlling feeling which guided her to what it was best to say. Her best writing was done at a fever heat, without any special prearrangement of what should be said, and she seldom rewrote to any great extent. "She told me," says Mr. Cross, "that, in all that she considered her best writing, there was a 'not herself' which took possession of her, and that she felt her own personality to be merely the instrument through which this spirit, as it were, was acting. Particularly she dwelt on this in regard to the scene in 'Middlemarch' between Dorothea and Rosamond, saying that although she always knew they had, sooner or later, to come together, she kept the idea resolutely out of her mind until Dorothea was in Rosamond's drawing-room. Then, abandoning herself to the inspiration of the moment, she wrote the whole scene exactly as it stands, without alteration or erasure, in an intense state of excitement and agitation, feeling herself entirely possessed by the feelings of the two women." She did not accept the idea of "inspiration," in the religious sense, for she had no belief whatever in any objective influence as affecting her thoughts. It was but another illustration of her reliance on feeling as a true guide in life, that she should have abandoned herself to her emotions in her writing, and trusted to them to guide her to what it was best to say.

In preparing for her writing, she began with those elements of character which she wished to represent, and then invented such a story and such characters as would develop these moods and passions. She said to Mr. John Morley, in 1877, as he states her words: "She was speaking of the different methods of the poetic or creative art, and said that she began with moods, thoughts, passions, and then invented the story for their sake, and fitted it to them; Shakespeare, on the other hand, picked up a story that struck him, and then proceeded to work in the moods, thoughts, passions, as they came to him in the course of meditation on the story." It was this method

of working, by first becoming possessed with the passions she wished to delineate, which gave her the inspiration of which Mr. Cross speaks. That method roused every faculty of her mind, and concentrated the creative functions on one purpose.

Her face was one of marked power, not beautiful, but massive and strong. Her nose was large, her mouth expressive, her hair black, and her eyes keen with intellectual light. Her features were too massive to be suggestive of beauty, but they gave the impression of a great life shining through them. Her brows gave the hint of large intellectual powers, and her smile was one of rare beauty and expressiveness. She enjoyed laughter, and the good things which were said by others. Her mind did not move actively enough or with that alertness of power which is necessary for general conversation; but in the company of two or three congenial minds she could talk with great effectiveness. She had the greatest enjoyment of music, poetry, and all the arts. If her mind was intellectual in its cast, it was also artistic in its movement. She delighted in beauty of whatever kind, and eagerly studied it in all its phases. There was a woman's anxiety, however, for what is pure and wholesome. No word of hers was ever written with a lowered sense of moral obligation, but always she kept strong within her the desire to give life whatever of moral worth was possible through her writings. She would have preferred not to write at all to writing what would be unwholesome to the moral life of mankind. Among the great literary creators in prose she stands among the foremost in the ethical intent of her writings, and in the profound conviction she had of the moral worth of life. Her theories may have been false, but her moral aim was always of the highest. She was surprised and hurt to learn that those who read her books found them sad and depressing; for, above all things, she desired that they should give courage and moral purpose to the world.

In her life, besides its modesty and its shrinking from the world, there was something of self-willed determination and a great loyalty of purpose. On more than one occasion she showed a purpose to defy conventionality, and to act from

motives of her own. This seems not to be in harmony with the other characteristics of her life; but it stands there as a marked indication of how the shrinking woman could act for herself when it was necessary. She was no revolutionist in feeling or in thought, but her mind was too large always to be satisfied with conventional reasons. A little of hardness under adverse conditions, and a capacity for defiance to what is unjust, appear now and then in her character, and show that she was capable of something else than affection. The stern sense of justice she had, however, in a remarkable degree; and that kept her from acting out the harsher side of her nature. She had a keen sense of what is just and right, and for that she always sought. At the same time her nature was capable of great tenderness and affection. She drew others to her in the warmest confidences, and she had a rich capacity for helping and consoling others. Her letters of condolence to her friends in cases of sorrow are of the most sympathetic nature, and full of the deep riches of her affection. She made many friends, and she held them warmly to her through the most trying circumstances. They believed in her, whatever they may have thought of her conduct. There was no disloyalty in her nature to the personal springs of moral conduct; and she was equally loyal to the ties and obligations of personal friendship and fidelity. She shrank always from that inadequate expression of thought and feeling which accompanies intercourse by the means of letters; and she longed for that face-to-face confidence which makes one's life really known to others.

Her letters are full of interest, and are remarkable indications of her literary power and the wide range of her intellectual sympathies. It was not her custom to write on high themes in her letters; but some of the best expressions of her thought are contained in them. In answer to her correspondents she would sometimes open her mind on philosophical and religious topics, and these indications of the direction of her thought are remarkable for their keenness of intellectual insight and their breadth of spirit. Her interest in her friends was always warm and sympathetic, and she was constantly

anxious for news of them. She never descended to gossip or to the trivial matters of letter-writing; but there was a fresh interest always manifest in the affairs of her friends. She was not a great letter-writer, for the activities of her mind found expression in other directions. She did not enjoy writing letters, and her whole soul never went into them.

The circle of her friends was a large one, in view of the fact of her being debarred from society. She retained through life many of the intimate friends of her youth, and she gained others by the charm of her intercourse and by the influence of her books. Not going into society or making visits her friends were those only who were firmly attached to her, and who valued her for her own sake. To a large extent her friends were among the literary and scientific leaders of the day, who found in her a congenial intellectual companion. Her attitude towards her contemporaries was always generous and appreciative. Now and then, only, did she have a sharp word to say about any of the men and women who were attracting public attention by their literary or scientific work. When she read "Aurora Leigh," she wrote of it to Sara Hennell with words of the warmest praise, having read it for the third time and with more delight than ever: "I know no book that gives me a deeper sense of communion with a large as well as beautiful mind." Later on she notes in her journal that she had read "Casa Guidi Windows" with great delight, and had found in it, among other admirable things, a very noble expression of what she believed to be the true relation of the religious mind to the past. She met Renan on one or two occasions, and she was much attracted by him as a thinker and as an interpreter of the religious life of the past. In 1863 she wrote of him: "Renan is a favorite with me. I feel more kinship with his mind than with that of any other living French author." With his "Life of Jesus" she was not at all fascinated, but thought it too much a piece of romantic reconstruction of what was plain enough in itself. She mentions Ruskin several times in her letters with admiration, and she read his books with delight. "I venerate him," she wrote in 1858, "as one of the great teachers of the day. The

grand doctrines of truth and sincerity in art, and the nobleness and solemnity of our human life, which he teaches with the inspiration of a Hebrew prophet, must be stirring up young minds in a promising way. The last two volumes of 'Modern Painters' contain, I think, some of the finest writing of the age. He is strongly akin to the sublimest part of Wordsworth — whom, by the bye, we are reading with fresh admiration for his beauty and tolerance for his faults." Her personal intercourse with Tennyson was very pleasant. She expressed the opinion that "some smaller wholes among the lyrics" are those parts of his work which are decisive of his "high place among the immortals." "Then, again, I think Tennyson's dramas such as the world should be glad of — and would be, if there had been no prejudgment that he could not write a drama." These words of sympathetic approval could be multiplied from her letters, but they are sufficient to indicate her general attitude of mind towards those working about her. She had nothing of jealousy in her nature, and was always rejoiced to find that which is good in others.

For work that is not sound and just she had a great dislike. All literary presumption was opposed to the bent of her mind, and could not win her approval. Buckle was one of the very few authors for whom she had no liking, and she said of him to a friend: "He is a writer who inspires me with a personal dislike; not to put too fine a point on it, he impresses me as an irreligious, conceited man." The air of pretension about Buckle and his work led to her dislike of him and his theories. He was wanting in reverence, and he was a strong radical. She had little sympathy with freethinkers of any kind, and was not inclined to accept patiently the teachings of those who would merely overthrow the ideals of men of whatever kind. At the same time she had no love for any author or artist whose moral purpose was not thoroughly sound and healthy. This made her say that she was utterly out of sympathy with the poetry of Byron. "He seems to me," was her verdict, "the most *vulgar-minded* genius that ever produced a great effect in literature." This opinion was doubtless occasioned in some degree by a want of literary appreciation of

Byron's poetry; but it marks her high sense of the moral aim as essential to any genuine literary work. In all her letters, as well as throughout her books, this moral purpose is predominant. She measured every author by his moral power and the wholesomeness of his moral teaching. It is perhaps unjust to judge an author entirely from this basis, regardless of his artistic powers; but the moral quality is one that, more than any other, tells us what the man was, and what is likely to be the effect of his work upon the world. In this critical judgment we see the deep-wrought nature of the moral impulse as it existed in George Eliot, and how thoroughly at heart her moral purpose was sound and healthy. The moral effect of her books is of the very best, as she is ever on the side of right conduct and purity of heart.

She had no sympathy whatever with that conception of life which permits the individual to become his own guide and law, regardless of the welfare of others. She had no desire to take sanctuary under the plea of genius, in any selfishness or in any narrow culture of one's self. To a friend she wrote these emphatic words concerning this form of individualism: "The teaching you quote as George Sand's would, I think, deserve to be called nonsensical if it did not deserve to be called wicked. What sort of 'culture of the intellect' is that which, instead of widening the mind to a fuller and fuller response to all the elements of our existence, isolates it in a moral stupidity? — which flatters egoism with the possibility that a complex and refined human society can continue, wherein relations have no sacredness beyond the inclination of changing moods? — or figures to itself an æsthetic human life that one may compare to that of the fabled grasshoppers who were once men, but having heard the song of the Muses could do nothing but sing, and starved themselves so till they died and had a fit resurrection as grasshoppers." She asked no favor for herself as an author which she did not think ought to be given to every worker. There was little of the egotism of genius in her nature; at least, none of that egotism which supposes that genius should be granted privileges not given to hard work. To her, the measure of what one is to

receive of the world is the measure of what one does for mankind.

The moral bent of her mind was not more conspicuous than her conservatism. Her association with the leaders of scientific thought, her sympathy with the teachings of Comte, and her setting aside of conventional standards in regard to her first marriage, have led to the belief that she was a radical of the most pronounced type. Such, however, was not the case; and she was, in reality, a decided conservative by nature and conviction. She held advanced ideas, it is true, and some of the most ultra kind, but the general tenor of her mind was towards the old and the stable. She was no revolutionist or iconoclast, and had no desire to have the good old order of things set aside in favor of any fresh theories of the present day. In the early days of her independent thinking she wrote to Miss Sara Hennell, the friend with whom she spoke most freely on these subjects, of the tendency of her mind to venerate whatever had entered deeply into the life of mankind: "I have a growing conviction that we may measure true moral and intellectual culture by the comprehension and veneration given to all forms of thought and feeling which have influenced large masses of mankind — and of all intolerance the intolerance calling itself philosophical is the most odious to me." The same tendency of mind expressed itself again and again in her letters, for she felt that nothing was to be gained by the spirit of destruction. As in regard to religious beliefs, so in politics, her sympathies were on the side of stability and order. She rejoiced in the conservative reaction which followed the extension of suffrage. "I wish," she wrote of one movement of this kind, "there were some solid, philosophical Conservative to take the reins — one who knows the true functions of stability in human affairs." Her distrust of the ballot was very strong, and she could not conceal her contempt for it as a means of righting the wrongs of the world. To one who had written against the ballot she said, "It has been a source of amazement to me that men acquainted with practical life can believe in the suppression of bribery by the ballot, as if bribery in all its Protean forms could ever disappear by means

of a single external arrangement. They might as well say that our female vanity would disappear at an order that women should wear felt hats and cloth dresses." Concerning the conservative reaction of 1873, she wrote: "I, who am no believer in salvation by the ballot, am rather tickled that the first experiment with it has turned against its adherents."

This conservative attitude gave form and direction to all her theories of human society. Her mind was open to new ideas and to belief in the growth of the social relations; but she was cautious in advancing anything that was revolutionary in its nature. Not believing in the ballot for men, she did not covet it for women. The rights she most desired for women were those of being womanly in the largest sense, and of having those opportunities for culture which would best fit them for the duties of life. Her interest in the education of women was keen and full of purpose to help others. To a leader of the woman's rights movement in England she wrote: "I do sympathize with you most emphatically in the desire to see women socially elevated — educated equally with men, and secured as far as possible, along with every other breathing creature, from suffering the exercise of an unrighteous power. That is a broader ground of sympathy than agreement as to the amount and kind of result that may be hoped for from a particular measure. But on this special point I am far from thinking myself an oracle, and on the whole I am inclined to hope for much good from the serious presentation of woman's claims before Parliament." She was greatly interested in all the efforts made to gain a better education for women, and to this work she gave all the sympathies of her mind and heart. She felt that it is a broad and generous education women need, far more than the ballot. She even had a desire to associate herself in some intimate way with work of this kind. "In her view," says Mr. Cross, "the family life holds the roots of all that is best in our mortal lot; and she always felt that it is far too ruthlessly sacrificed in the case of English *men* by their public school and university education, and that much more is such a result to be deprecated in the case of women. But the absolute good being

unattainable in our mixed condition of things, those women especially who are obliged to earn their own living must do their best with the opportunities at their command, as 'they cannot live with posterity,' when a more perfect system may prevail. Therefore, George Eliot wished God speed to the women's colleges. It was often in her mind and on her lips that the only worthy end of all learning, of all science, of all life, in fact, is, that human beings should love one another better. Culture merely for culture's sake can never be anything but a sapless root, capable of producing at best a shrivelled branch." This attitude of cautious radicalism was characteristic of her in every phase of her life and thought. She believed in culture, science, philosophy, art, and all that enters most largely and deeply into human life, to lift it above the drudgery of the day; but she valued it all in exact proportion to its power of helping men and women to more of life and a purer satisfaction in it.

As she was not a radical in the most advanced sense, so she was not an optimist. The painful elements of human existence were very prominent to her thought, and her mind often dwelt on them. The good of life seemed to her to be small, and most of it lay in the direction of the service men can render to each other by their sympathy and helpfulness. She invented the word "Meliorist" to express her own attitude towards the gradual development which the world is making. The evil of the world weighed painfully upon her, and she felt the constant burden of it; but she felt that it would gradually lessen through the creation of a human providence in the enlarged sympathies of men. The sense of the practical evils of life was always strong upon her, and weighed down and oppressed her heart. This feeling entered into her life, along with her natural despondency, to give a color of sadness and grief to all her thoughts of the world. Something of the old ascetic conception of the dark and painful side of human experience there was undoubtedly in all her feelings about life, as well as in her thoughts of it. The sense of death was constantly present to her mind, and it was a shadow, not by any means of hurting, which ever hung over the sunshine of her life.

She thoroughly believed in the sympathetic good there is in life, and she was anxious to increase the sum of it by every effort of her own. In the growth of the good she heartily had faith, but it was to be wholly by the efforts of men. In the times to come she thought men would care more for the development of the humanitarian spirit than they do now, and that a wide-reaching sympathy and helpfulness for the human race would be awakened, that would lift mankind to a higher form of life. This coming good of the race was to her an article of the sincerest faith, and she looked forward to that good in all her thoughts about mankind. In her belief the good is never wholly to blot out the evil and the painful, but it can reduce wrong to the lowest terms, and make the painful capable of being borne with patience. This mitigation of human suffering was all she hoped for, and all she felt men needed.

The conservative bent of her mind may be seen in her attitude towards the scientific teachings of her time. More thoroughly than any other author she has incorporated the scientific ideas of the last thirty years in her books; but her tendency of mind was not towards an extreme view of the worth of science. She did not care for speculation as speculation, and however good scientific theories might be, they had little weight with her unless they were founded on a solid basis of truth, and carried some force for the poetry and hope of mankind. It was not her habit to seek the guidance of speculative science in regard to the moral and altruistic duties of life, and this fact she has expressed in one of the most suggestive of her letters: "As to the necessary combinations through which life is manifested, and which seem to present themselves to you as a hideous fatalism, which ought logically to petrify your volition, have they, in fact, any such influence on your ordinary course of action in the primary affairs of your existence as a human, social, domestic creature? And if they don't hinder you from taking measures for a bath, without which you know that you cannot secure the delicate cleanliness which is your second nature, why should they hinder you from a line of resolve in a higher strain of duty to your ideal, both for your

self and others? But the consideration of molecular physics is not the direct ground of human love and moral action any more than it is the direct means of composing a noble picture or of enjoying fine music. One might as well hope to dissect one's own body, and be merry in doing it, as take molecular physics (in which you must banish from your field what is specifically human) to be your dominant guide, your determiner of motives, in what is solely human. That every study has its bearing on every other is true; but pain and relief, love and sorrow, have their peculiar history, which make an experience and knowledge over and above the swing of atoms."

These words sufficiently indicate her rejection of the facts and laws of the physical world as the guides to moral conduct, or as having a determining influence on our conceptions of human life. They ought to be placed by the side of the words written to the same friend a few months later, in which she gave utterance to her views about the emotional life in man. It is not science, but poetry in its widest sense, which has a commanding influence in guiding and shaping the higher life in man. "Consider what the human mind *en masse* would have been," she says, "if there had been no such combination of elements in it as has produced poets. All the philosophers and *savants* would not have sufficed to supply the deficiency. And how can the life of nations be understood without the inward light of poetry — that is, of emotion blended with thought?" All that touches and affects the emotional life made its deep impression on her mind. She felt that the mystery of existence is quite beyond any little range of facts about the universe man has yet discovered, and is far more important in its effect on human existence. This is to be noted in regard to the words she wrote when Darwin's "Origin of Species" was first published: "But to me the Development Theory, and all other explanations of processes by which things came to be, produce a feeble impression compared with the mystery that lies under the processes." This recognition of the great mystery of being gave her the truest element of poetry, and helped her to a devout and a profoundly reverent attitude of mind.

She found in Comte a thinker who satisfied her love of mystery and poetry, but who also gave her a theory of the world which satisfied her love of science. She said of him in 1867: "My gratitude increases continually for the illumination Comte has contributed to my life." She was a constant reader of his books, and her faith in him grew with acquaintance. "For all Comte's writing," says Mr. Cross, "she had a feeling of high admiration, intense interest, and very deep sympathy. I do not think I ever heard her speak of any writer with a more grateful sense of obligation for enlightenment." And yet her acceptance of him was of a modified kind, for she did not embrace all his theories, or follow him as a disciple. His religious teachings did not by any means satisfy her; and it was perhaps only in the direction of his altruism that she was thoroughly in sympathy with him.

In approaching the subject of her religious beliefs, it is to be remembered that she was not a rationalist in the usual sense, for she refused to think that men are to be guided by the conclusions of reason alone. According to her view much of what men believe is determined by the emotions, and in feeling she found the truest guide to the relations of men to each other. In her youth she made a statement of her belief that nothing is to be gained by an attempt to draw men together on the grounds of a uniformity of opinion; and to that conviction she held through her life: "Agreement between intellects seems unattainable, and we turn to the *truth of feeling* as the only universal bond of union." Later on in life, after she had found how the world deals with those who break its conventional requirements, she wrote to Charles Bray in a spirit of toleration learned by the bitterest experience: "I have had heart-cutting experience that opinions are a poor cement between human souls: and the only effect I ardently long to produce by my writings is, that those who read them should be better able to imagine and to feel the pains and the joys of those who differ from themselves in everything but the broad fact of being struggling, erring, human creatures." She gave the emotional life a significance which is not usual, and it had much to do in determining her intellectual theories.

She was little concerned about beliefs, but much about common feelings and sympathies. The spirit of love was what she cared for, and the capacity to feel with and for others. The range of her sympathies was very great, and she did not count the intellectual harmony to be attained, as of much value compared with the possibility of a unity of feeling. That was what she aimed at in her own life, and what she strove to inculcate in her books. As a result, her religion was one of toleration and humanity, and not one of creeds in any sense. It was the emotional and imaginative elements in all religion which appealed to her, and it was for the sake of these she had faith in its great teachings. "What pitiable people those are," she exclaimed, "who feel no poetry in Christianity! Surely the acme of poetry hitherto is the conception of the suffering Messiah, and the final triumph, 'He shall reign forever and forever.'" In thus speaking of the emotional side of Christianity she by no means wished to convey the idea that she also accepted its intellectual conclusions, for she did not. Any religion was of value to her in proportion to its power of giving adequate outlet to the emotions, and as it was able through its symbolism to satisfy the soul's craving for outward expression. In fact, to her, religion was true subjectively simply as a means of voicing the inward life. The speculative part of religion she did not believe in, and it was only the humanitarian and the emotional side of it which interested her. Writing to a correspondent who wished that men might be of one mind in the love of the good, she said: "I think it would be possible that men should differ speculatively as much as they do now, and yet be of one mind in the desire to avoid giving unnecessary pain, in the desire to do an honest part towards the general well-being, which has made a comfortable *nidus* for themselves, in the resolve not to sacrifice another to their own egoistic promptings. Pity and fairness — two little words which, carried out, would embrace the utmost delicacies of the moral life — seem to me not to rest on an unverifiable hypothesis, but on facts quite as irreversible as the perception that a pyramid will not stand on its apex."

To the same correspondent she protested against taking the word of physical science as decisive in regard to any of the great facts of religion, for she held that the theories of any man of science are but mere speculations compared with the great body of emotional results obtained by the long experience of mankind. "I should urge you to consider your early religious experience as a portion of valid knowledge, and to cherish its emotional results in relation to objects and ideas which are either substitutes or metamorphoses of the earlier. And I think we must not take every great physicist — or other *ist* — for an apostle, but be ready to suspect him of some crudity, concerning relations that lie outside his special studies, if his exposition strands us on results that seem to stultify the most ardent, massive experience of mankind, and hem up the best part of our feelings in stagnation." This regard for the emotional life, which is so important an element in all religion, gives the keynote to her theories on the subject.

In the emotions she found the sanctions for religion. "There is really no moral 'sanction' but this inward impulse," she said. "The will of God is the same thing as the will of other men, compelling us to work, and avoid what they have seen to be harmful to social existence. Disjoined from any perceived good, the divine will is simply so much as we have ascertained of the facts of existence which compel obedience at our peril. Any other notion comes from the supposition of arbitrary revelation." She was not willing to entertain the idea of a personal God but, at the same time, she was not willing wholly to reject it. It was the human element in the conception of God for which she cared, and she held that this was wholly the result of our experience of what men are, and what they are willing to do in helping each other. "The idea of God," she said, "so far as it has been a high spiritual influence, is the ideal of a goodness entirely human (that is, an exaltation of the human)." The goodness which we see among men, enthroned over the universe, becomes our God. She took her conception of God from the noblest features of man's moral conduct, and not from the beauty and grandeur of the universe, for she was no Pantheist. "I do not find my

temple in Pantheism," she wrote to Mrs. Stowe, "which, whatever might be its value speculatively, could not yield a practical religion, since it is an attempt to look at the universe from the outside of our relations to it (the universe) as human beings. As healthy, sane human beings, we must love and hate — love what is good for mankind, hate what is evil for mankind. For years of my youth I dwelt in dreams of a pantheistic sort, falsely supposing that I was enlarging my sympathy. But I have travelled far away from that." If she had left Pantheism, however, she had not gained a more distinct and positive idea of God. Mr. Frederic Myers has given an account of a conversation with her, in which this subject came up for discussion: "I remember how, at Cambridge, I walked with her once in the Fellows' Garden of Trinity, on an evening of rainy May; and she, stirred somewhat beyond her wont, and taking as her text the three words which have been used so often as the inspiring trumpet-calls of man, — the words *God, Immortality, Duty,* — pronounced, with terrible emphasis, how inconceivable was the first, how unbelievable the second, and yet how peremptory and absolute the third. Never, perhaps, have sterner accents affirmed the sovereignty of impersonal and unrecompensed law. I listened, and night fell; her grave, majestic countenance turned towards me like a sibyl's in the gloom; it was as though she withdrew from my grasp, one by one, the two scrolls of promise, and left me the third scroll only, awful with inevitable fates." This picture is a little too highly wrought to be strictly accurate, and yet it gives a fairly good idea of George Eliot's attitude towards the conception of God. The moral sanctions for her did not grow out of that belief, and she did not find it essential for any of the higher purposes of life.

Especially was it her idea that we are to resist the mere comfort of faith in a personal God. We should endure all things for the truth's sake, and accept the truth because it is the truth. She would not entertain any symbolism for the things of the higher life, because any and all are inadequate. "As for the forms and ceremonies," she wrote to one who inquired about them, "I feel no regret that any should turn to

them for comfort if they can find comfort in them; sympathetically I enjoy them myself. But I have faith in the working out of higher possibilities than the Catholic or any other Church has presented; and those who have strength to wait and endure are bound to accept no formula which their whole souls — their intellect as well as their emotions — do not embrace with entire reverence. The highest calling and election is to do without opium, and live through all our pain with conscious, clear-eyed endurance." It was not hardness of heart or illiberality of intellect which made her decline the "opium," but the desire to reach that which is in itself good and enduring. Emotionally she was quite in sympathy with all that was noble and pure in the religion accepted about her; but she had the martyr's anxiety to testify to what is the exact truth, which was, in this instance, not a creed, but the wish to get outside of all creeds, and to find that which is solid ground for the relations of men to each other. She read the Bible with delight and with reverence, and even such a book as the "Imitation of Christ" was her daily companion. She gave them an interpretation of her own, but it was one which sought the spirit and not the letter of their teaching. The elevation of humanity was what she sought for as the meaning of all religion. "Will you not agree with me," she wrote to Mrs. Stowe, "that there is one comprehensive Church whose fellowship consists in the desire to purify and ennoble human life, and where the best members of all narrower churches may call themselves brother and sister in spite of differences?" To much the same effect were the words she wrote to Mr. Cross, in regard to conforming to the religious customs of the world about us: "All the great religions of the world, historically considered, are rightly the objects of deep reverence and sympathy — they are the record of spiritual struggles which are the types of our own. This is to me pre-eminently true of Hebrewism and Christianity, on which my own youth was nourished. And in this sense I have no antagonism towards any religious belief, but a strong outflow of sympathy. Every community met to worship the highest Good (which is understood to be expressed by God) carries me along in its

main current; and if there were not reasons against my following such an inclination, I should go to church or chapel constantly for the sake of the delightful emotions of fellowship which come over me in religious assemblies — the very nature of such assemblies being the recognition of a binding belief, or spiritual law, which is to lift us into willing obedience and save us from the slavery of unregulated passion or impulse." The reasons restraining her from church attendance were probably those growing out of the fear of appearing to believe what she did not believe. There would have been the conclusion arrived at, had she gone to church, that she was a believer in the creed of the church she attended, and that it gave full satisfaction to her religious aspirations.

George Eliot's religion can be summed up very briefly: it was faith in humanity. The past of the race, she thought, was the source of the beliefs we entertain, and that it has made for us the life which we are living to-day. Our great and all-sufficient duty in the present is to live for our fellows. Our immortality in the future is to be found in the good which we can do that will help the race onward to a nobler life. She carried the altruistic faith to its highest expression, stripped it of all association with older faiths, and gave it a grand statement in her novels and poems. What others have found of comfort, hope, and inspiration in the love of God she found so far as it can be found in the love of man. That faith cheered her, it gave inspiration to her books, and it made her of a worshipping spirit in every act of life.

She accepted the scientific theory, the outcome of the doctrine of development, that all man's ideas and feelings are an inheritance from the life that he has lived in the past. This idea controlled her conception of immortality. She did not believe in a personal existence in the future; at least, she put that belief aside from her mind as not being one to control the actions of life. As man has inherited the past, so does he help to make the future. She did believe, therefore, in a subjective immortality, or an immortality in the race. This is the inspiration of the poem, "Oh, may I join the choir invisible." She seems to have taken much satisfaction in this belief, and to

have found in it the highest comfort. It was in harmony with her altruism and her enthusiasm for humanity.

Having considered George Eliot as a moral teacher, some word ought to be said of her as an artist. In this direction the purpose which guided her was that of truthfulness. After "Adam Bede" was published she wrote to Blackwood: "Truth in art is so startling that no one can believe in it as art, and the specific forms of religious life which have made some of the grandest elements in human history are looked down upon as if they were not within the artist's sympathy and veneration and intensely dramatic reproduction." Some years later she expressed to Mr. Frederic Harrison her high sense of the worth of the beautiful as presented in art: "I think æsthetic teaching is the highest of all teaching, because it deals with life in its highest complexity. But if it ceases to be purely æsthetic — if it lapses anywhere from the picture to the diagram — it becomes the most offensive of all teaching." She wished to be an æsthetic and not a doctrinal teacher; and this desire she expressed to one who sought to obtain her influence on the side of the practical reforms of the day: "I thought that you understood that I have grave reasons for not speaking on certain public topics. No request from the best friend in the world — even from my own husband — ought to induce me to speak when I judge it my duty to be silent. If I had taken a contrary decision, I should not have remained silent till now. My function is that of the *æsthetic*, not the doctrinal teacher — the rousing of the noble emotions. which make mankind desire the social right, not the prescribing of special measures, concerning which the artistic mind, however strongly moved by social sympathy, is often not the best judge."

These words ought not to lead to the conclusion that George Eliot was merely an artist, and that she did not care for the moral results of her work. On the other hand, nothing is plainer than that she deliberately and persistently aimed at being a moral teacher, and at producing certain results on the lives of the readers of her books. She chose, however, to do this through the emotions, and not by attempting to teach those doctrinal conclusions about life which would lead to a

special form of conduct. She was an artist because aiming at those emotional effects which are the truest helps to the life of mankind.

As a writer of novels her name deserves to stand among the highest, both as a story-teller and as a creator of character. Her books sometimes seem to be too much cumbered with learning and with the moral teaching she put into them; but, on the whole, they are interesting throughout and full of charm. She had the gift of laughter and of pathos in about equal measure, and she mingled smiles and tears as they are mingled in life. She made her characters clear-cut and living, with a strong and insistent personality of their own.

Her books are all inspired with her love of mankind, and by her desire to make life brighter and purer. The love of her fellows was a continual joy and inspiration to her, and it is shown in the way in which she deals with the defects and the aspirations of her characters. She yearned with a great longing for the good and the growth of the human race, and that desire infused itself into her pages to give them purpose and inspiration. Of her it could truly be said that she was one who loved her fellow-men, and that she lived to make the doing of good easier to all who came after her.

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